

LEIGH HUNT'S
WHAT IS POETRY ?

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His criticism is very distinct in kind. It is almost purely and in the strict and proper sense æsthetic — that is to say, it does hardly anything but reproduce the sensations produced upon Hunt himself by the reading of his favorite passages. As his sense of poetry was extraordinarily keen and accurate, there is perhaps no body of ‘beauties’ of English poetry to be found anywhere in the language which is selected with such uniform and unerring judgment as this or these. . . . The worst that can be said of Leigh Hunt’s general critical axioms and conclusions is that they are much better than the reasons that support them. For instance, he is probably right in calling the famous ‘intellectual’ and ‘henpecked you all,’ in *Don Juan* [see p. 63], ‘the happiest triple rime ever written.’ But when he goes on to say that ‘the sweepingness of the assumption completes the flowing breadth of the effect,’ he goes very near to talking nonsense. For most people, however, a true opinion persuasively stated is of much more consequence than the most elaborate logical justification of it; and it is this that makes Leigh Hunt’s criticism such excellent good reading. . . . As a rule he avoids the things that he is not qualified to judge, such as the rougher and sublimer parts of poetry. Of its sweetness and its music, of its grace and its wit, of its tenderness and its fancy, no better judge ever existed than Leigh Hunt.

SAINTSBURY, *Essays in English Literature*, pp. 223-226.

Leigh Hunt

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION

‘WHAT IS POETRY?’

INCLUDING

REMARKS ON VERSIFICATION

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

THE essay here reprinted is the initial one in Leigh Hunt's *Imagination and Fancy*, which is among the very best of his prose works. In the Preface to that volume, which was published in 1844, he thus describes his object in writing it : "to furnish such an account, in an Essay, of the nature and requirements of poetry, *as may enable readers in general to give an answer on those points to themselves and others.*" The whole volume is suggestive, so much so that Ruskin refers to it as an "admirable piece of criticism," and adds that it "ought to be read with care" (*Modern Painters*, Vol. III., 'Of Imagination Penetrative'). Still, the opening essay is the only part of the book which bears the character of sustained exposition, the remainder consisting mostly of poetical extracts, with brief introductions and comments ; it is, accordingly the part which is likely to prove most acceptable to students of the theory and art of poetry.

The author is frequently inaccurate in quotation ; as there is no advantage, but rather loss, in perpet-

uating the results of inadvertence, I have endeavored to verify all the passages cited, and to conform them to the reading of the most authoritative editions. In the cases where I have not succeeded, I shall be grateful for information from those who are better read. With reference to the use of italics for emphasis, in which Hunt abounds, I need scarcely say that I have made no change.

As Leigh Hunt gave to the volume from which this essay is taken the title of *Imagination and Fancy*, and as he has much to say on these two subjects, it has seemed to me that students might be glad of the opportunity to consult with ease the principal discussions of these two related faculties, antecedent to the date of Hunt's volume. I have therefore collected in a note near the end of this book the chief passages from Coleridge and Wordsworth bearing upon this subject, together with those from Jean Paul upon which Coleridge is supposed to have built his theory.

ALBERT S. COOK.

YALE UNIVERSITY, Feb. 27, 1893.

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION
WHAT IS POETRY?
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POETRY, strictly and artistically so called, that is to say, considered not merely as poetic feeling, which is more or less shared by all the world, but as the operation of that feeling, such as we see it in the poet's book, is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity. Its means are whatever the universe contains; and its ends, pleasure and exaltation. Poetry stands between nature and convention, keeping alive among us the enjoyment of the external and the spiritual world; it has constituted the most enduring fame of nations; and, next to Love and Beauty, which are its parents, is the greatest proof to man of

the pleasure to be found in all things, and of the probable riches of infinitude.

Poetry is a passion,¹ because it seeks the deepest impressions; and because it must undergo,
5 in order to convey them.

It is a passion for truth, because without truth the impression would be false or defective.

It is a passion for beauty, because its office is to exalt and refine by means of pleasure, and
10 because beauty is nothing but the loveliest form of pleasure.

It is a passion for power, because power is impression triumphant, whether over the poet, as desired by himself, or over the reader, as affected
15 by the poet.

It embodies and illustrates its impressions by imagination, or images of the objects of which it treats, and other images brought in to throw light on those objects, in order that it may enjoy and
20 impart the feeling of their truth in its utmost conviction and affluence.

It illustrates them by fancy, which is a lighter play of imagination, or the feeling of analogy coming short of seriousness, in order that it may
25 laugh with what it loves, and show how it can decorate it with fairy ornament.

It modulates what it utters, because in running the whole round of beauty it must needs include beauty of sound; and because, in the height of

¹ *Passio*, suffering in a good sense, — ardent subjection of one's self to emotion. (Author's note.)

its enjoyment, it must show the perfection of its triumph, and make difficulty itself become part of its facility and joy.

And lastly, Poetry shapes this modulation into uniformity for its outline, and variety for its 5 parts, because it thus realizes the last idea of beauty itself, which includes the charm of diversity within the flowing round of habit and ease.

Poetry is imaginative passion. The quickest and subtlest test of the possession of its essence 10 is in expression; the variety of things to be expressed shows the amount of its resources; and the continuity of the song completes the evidence of its strength and greatness. He who has thought, feeling, expression, imagination, action, 15 character, and continuity, all in the largest amount and highest degree, is the greatest poet.

Poetry includes whatsoever of painting can be made visible to the mind's eye,¹ and whatsoever of music can be conveyed by sound and proportion 20 without singing or instrumentation. But it far surpasses those divine arts in suggestiveness, range, and intellectual wealth;—the first, in expression of thought, combination of images, and the triumph over space and time; the second, 25 in all that can be done by speech, apart from the tones and modulations of pure sound. Painting and music, however, include all those portions of the gift of poetry that can be expressed and heightened by the visible and melodious. Paint- 30

¹ But see the arguments in Lessing's *Laokoon*.

ing, in a certain apparent manner, is things themselves ; music, in a certain audible manner, is their very emotion and grace. Music and painting are proud to be related to poetry, and poetry
 5 loves and is proud of them.

Poetry begins where matter of fact or of science ceases to be merely such, and to exhibit a further truth, that is to say, the connection it has with the world of emotion, and its power to produce
 10 imaginative pleasure. Inquiring of a gardener, for instance, what flower it is we see yonder, he answers, 'A lily.' This is matter of fact. The botanist pronounces it to be of the order of 'Hexandria monogynia.'¹ This is matter of
 15 science. It is the 'lady' of the garden,² says Spenser ; and here we begin to have a poetical sense of its fairness and grace. It is

The plant and flower of *light*,

says Ben Jonson ;³ and poetry then shows us the
 20 beauty of the flower in all its mystery and splendor.

If it be asked, how we know perceptions like these to be true, the answer is, by the fact of their existence — by the consent and delight of
 25 poetic readers. And as feeling is the earliest teacher, and perception the only final proof of things the most demonstrable by science, so the remotest imaginations of the poets may often be

¹ In the Linnæan system.

² Rather of the 'flowering field.' See *F. Q.* 2. 6. 16.

³ In the *Pindaric Ode on the Death of Sir H. Morison*.

found to have the closest connection with matter of fact ; perhaps might always be so, if the subtlety of our perceptions were a match for the causes of them. Consider this image of Ben Jonson's — of a lily being the flower of light. Light, undecom- 5 posed, is white ; and as the lily is white, and light is white, and whiteness itself is nothing *but* light, the two things, so far, are not merely similar, but identical. A poet might add, by an analogy drawn from the connection of light 10 and color, that there is a 'golden dawn' issuing out of the white lily, in the rich yellow of the stamens. I have no desire to push this similarity farther than it may be worth. Enough has been stated to show that, in poetical as well as in 15 other analogies, 'the same feet of Nature,' as Bacon says, may be seen 'treading in different paths';¹ and that the most scornful, that is to say, dullest disciple of fact, should be cautious how he betrays the shallowness of his philosophy 20 by discerning no poetry in its depths.

But the poet is far from dealing only with these subtle and analogical truths. Truth of every kind belongs to him, provided it can bud into any kind of beauty, or is capable of being illustrated and 25 impressed by the poetic faculty. Nay, the sim-

¹ From the *Advancement of Learning* 2. 5. 3: 'Neither are these only similitudes, as men of narrow observation may conceive them to be, but the same footsteps treading or printing upon several subjects or matters.' Also in *De Augment Scient.* cap. 1. lib. iii. (ed. of Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, 1. 543). The hint was probably taken from Shelley's *Defense of Poetry*, 5 4.

plest truth is often so beautiful and impressive of itself, that one of the greatest proofs of his genius consists in his leaving it to stand alone, illustrated by nothing but the light of its own tears or smiles, its own wonder, might, or playfulness. Hence the complete effect of many a simple passage in our old English ballads and romances, and of the passionate sincerity in general of the greatest early poets, such as Homer and Chaucer, who flourished before the existence of a 'literary world,' and were not perplexed by a heap of notions and opinions, or by doubts how emotion ought to be expressed. The greatest of their successors never write equally to the purpose, except when they can dismiss everything from their minds but the like simple truth. In the beautiful poem of Sir Eger, Sir Graham, and Sir Gray-Steel (see it in Ellis's *Specimens*, or Laing's *Early Metrical Tales* ¹), a knight thinks himself disgraced in the eyes of his mistress :—

Sir Eger says,² 'If it be so,
Then wot I well I must forgo
Love-liking, and manhood, all clean.'
The water rushed out of his een!

Sir Gray-Steel is killed :—

Gray-Steel into his death thus thraves [throes ?]
He *walters* [welters, — throws himself about] *and*
the grass up drawes;

* * * * *

¹ Lines 773 – 776. A different version may be found in *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript* I. 341–400.

² Hunt, 'said.'

*A little while then lay he still,
 (Friends that him saw liked full ill)
 And blood¹ into his armour bright.²*

The abode of Chaucer's Reve, or Steward, in the Canterbury Tales, is painted in two lines ; which nobody ever wished longer : —

His wonyng [dwelling] was ful fair upon an heeth ;
 With grene trees i-shadwed was his place.³

Every one knows the words of Lear, 'most *matter-of-fact*, most melancholy' : ⁴ — 10

Pray, do not mock me :
 I am a very foolish fond old man,
 Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less ;
 And, to deal plainly,
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.⁵ 15

It is thus, by exquisite pertinence, melody, and the implied power of writing with exuberance, if need be, that beauty and truth become identical in poetry, and that pleasure, or at the very worst, a balm in our tears, is drawn out of pain. 20

It is a great and rare thing, and shows a lovely imagination, when the poet can write a commentary, as it were, of his own, on such sufficing passages of nature, and be thanked for the addition. There is an instance of this kind in Warner, an 25

¹ So Laing; Ellis and Hunt have 'bled.'

² Lines 1611-1612, 1615-1617.

³ *Prologue* 606-607.

⁴ Adapted from Milton's *Il Penseroso* 62: 'Most musical, most melancholy.'

⁵ *King Lear* 4. 7. 59-63.

old Elizabethan poet, than which I know nothing sweeter in the world. He is speaking of Fair Rosamond, and of a blow given her by Queen Eleanor : —

- 5 With that she dasht her on the lippes, *so dyèd double red :*
Hard was the heart that gave the blow, soft were those
*lips that bled.*¹

There are different kinds and degrees of imagination, some of them necessary to the formation
 10 of every true poet, and all of them possessed by the greatest. Perhaps they may be enumerated as follows : — First, that which presents to the mind any object or circumstance in every-day life ; as when we imagine a man holding a sword, or
 15 looking out of a window ; — Second, that which presents real, but not every-day circumstances ; as King Alfred tending the loaves,² or Sir Philip Sidney giving up the water to the dying soldier ; — Third, that which combines character and
 20 events directly imitated from real life, with imitative realities of its own invention ; as the probable parts of the histories of Priam and Macbeth, or what may be called natural fiction as distinguished from supernatural ; — Fourth, that which conjures
 25 up things and events not to be found in nature ; as Homer's gods and Shakespeare's witches,

¹ *Albion's England* 8. 41. 53; ed. of 1597, p. 201. Modern editions usually print as four lines, and so Hunt did; it is here changed to conform to the original.

² See Pauli's *Alfred the Great* (Bohn series), p. 101. ❖

enchanted horses and spears,¹ Ariosto's hippogriff,² &c.; — Fifth, that which, in order to illustrate or aggravate one image, introduces another : sometimes in simile, as when Homer compares Apollo descending in his wrath at noon-day to the coming of night-time ;³ sometimes in metaphor, or simile comprised in a word, as in Milton's 'motes that *people* the sunbeams';⁴ sometimes in concentrating into a word the main history of any person or thing, past or even future, as in the 'starry Galileo'⁵ of Byron, and that ghastly foregone conclusion of the epithet 'murdered' applied to the yet living victim in Keats's story from Boccaccio, —

So the two brothers and their *murdered* man 15
Rode past ⁶ fair Florence ;⁷ —

sometimes in the attribution of a certain representative quality which makes one circumstance stand for others, as in Milton's gray-fly winding its '*sultry* horn,'⁸ which epithet contains the heat of a summer's day ; — Sixth, that which reverses this process, and makes a variety of circumstances take color from one, like nature seen with jaundiced or glad eyes, or under the influence of storm

¹ See Chaucer, *Clerke's Tale*; Ariosto, *Orl. Fur.* 8. 17, etc.; Spenser, *F. Q.* 3. 3. 60, etc.; and especially Warton, *Hist. Eng. Poetry* 2. 338–348, quoted in Skeat's edition of *The Prioresses Tale*, etc., pp. xxxiii–xli.

² See p. 18.

³ *Il.* 1. 47.

⁴ *Il Pens.* 8.

⁵ *Childe Harold* canto 4, st. 54.

⁶ Hunt, 'towards.'

⁷ *Isabella* st. 27.

⁸ *Lyc.* 28.

or sunshine ; as when in Lycidas, or the Greek pastoral poets, the flowers and the flocks are made to sympathize with a man's death ;¹ or, in the Italian poet, the river flowing by the sleeping
 5 Angelica seems talking of love —

Parea che l' erba a lei fiorisse intorno,
*E d' amor ragionasse quella riva !*²—

or in the voluptuous homage paid to the sleeping Imogen by the very light in the chamber and the
 10 reaction of her own beauty upon itself ;³ or in the 'witch element' of the tragedy of Macbeth and the May-day night⁴ of Faust ;— Seventh, and last, that which by a single expression, apparently of the vaguest kind, not only meets but surpasses
 15 in its effect the extremest force of the most particular description ; as in that exquisite passage of Coleridge's *Christabel*, where the unsuspecting object of the witch's malignity is bidden to go to bed :—

20 Quoth Christabel, So let it be !
 And as the lady bade, did she.
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness : ⁵—

a perfect verse surely, both for feeling and music.
 25 The very smoothness and gentleness of the limbs is in the series of the letter *l*'s.

¹ Ruskin's 'pathetic fallacy'; *Mod. Painters*, Part 4, Chap. 12.

² *Orl. Inn.* 1. 3. 69; Hunt inserts after the quotation, '*Orlando Innamorato*, canto iii.,' and writes 'le' for 'a lei.'

³ *Cymbeline* 2. 2. 19 ff.

⁴ Usually called the *Walpurgis-Night's Dream*.

⁵ Near the end of *Part the First*.

I am aware of nothing of the kind surpassing that most lovely inclusion of physical beauty in moral, neither can I call to mind any instances of the imagination that turns accompaniments into accessories, superior to those I have alluded to. 5
Of the class of comparison, one of the most touching (many a tear must it have drawn from parents and lovers) is in a stanza which has been copied into the *Friar of Orders Gray*¹ out of Beaumont and Fletcher :²—

10

Weep no more, lady, weep no more,
Thy sorrow is in vaine ;
For violets pluckt the sweetest showers
Will ne'er make grow againe.

And Shakespeare and Milton abound in the very 15
grandest ; such as Antony's likening his changing fortunes to the cloud-rack ;³ Lear's appeal to the old age of the heavens ;⁴ Satan's appearance in

¹ A cento composed by Bishop Percy out of fragments of the old poets, and printed in the earlier editions of the *Reliques*.

² The stanza probably by Fletcher (Fleay thinks Field), who may have been assisted in the composition of the play, *The Queen of Corinth*, by others, or another, but hardly by Beaumont (see Ward's *Eng. Dram. Lit.* 2. 220; *Englische Studien* 7. 75; 9. 22; 10. 390; Fleay, *Chronicle of the English Drama* 1. 206). The stanza, which was not in the first edition, runs (*Q. C.* 3. 2. 1-4):

Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that's gone;
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again.

³ *Ant. and Cl.* 4. 14. 3-14.

⁴ *King Lear* 2. 4. 192-195.

the horizon, like a fleet 'hanging in the clouds ;¹
 and the comparisons of him with the comet² and
 the eclipse.³ Nor unworthy of this glorious
 company, for its extraordinary combination of
 5 delicacy and vastness, is that enchanting one of
 Shelley's in the Adonais : —

Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
 Stains the white radiance of eternity.⁴

I multiply these particulars in order to impress
 10 upon the reader's mind the great importance of
 imagination in all its phases, as a constituent part
 of the highest poetic faculty.

The happiest instance I remember of imaginative metaphor is Shakespeare's moonlight 'sleep-
 15 ing' on a bank ;⁵ but half his poetry may be said
 to be made up of it, metaphor indeed being
 the common coin of discourse. Of imaginary
 creatures none, out of the pale of mythology and
 the East, are equal, perhaps, in point of invention,
 20 to Shakespeare's Ariel and Caliban ; though
 poetry may grudge to prose the discovery of a
 Winged Woman, especially such as she has been
 described by her inventor in the story of Peter
 Wilkins ;⁶ and in point of treatment, the Mam-

¹ *P. L.* 2. 637.

² *P. L.* 2. 708-716.

³ *P. L.* 1. 576-579.

⁴ Stanza 52. See W. M. Rossetti's note in his edition.

⁵ *Merch. Ven.* 5. 1. 54.

⁶ See the extract in Chambers' *Cycl. Eng. Lit.* The novel is by R. Paltock (pub. 1757); a facsimile reprint has been edited by A. H. Bullen (London, 1884).

mon¹ and Jealousy² of Spenser, some of the monsters in Dante, particularly his Nimrod,³ his interchangements of creatures into one another, and (if I am not presumptuous in anticipating what I think will be the verdict of posterity) the Witch in Coleridge's *Christabel*, may rank even with the creations of Shakespeare. It may be doubted, indeed, whether Shakespeare had bile and nightmare enough in him to have thought of such detestable horrors as those of the interchang-
 ing adversaries (now serpent, now man⁴), or even of the huge, half-blockish enormity of Nimrod, — in Scripture, the 'mighty hunter' and builder of the tower of Babel,⁵ — in Dante, a tower of a man in his own person, standing with some of his
 brother giants up to the middle in a pit in hell, blowing a horn to which a thunder-clap is a whisper, and hallooing after Dante and his guide in the jargon of a lost tongue! The transformations are too odious to quote; but of the
 towering giant we cannot refuse ourselves the 'fearful joy' of a specimen. It was twilight, Dante tells us, and he and his guide Virgil were silently pacing through one of the dreariest regions of hell, when the sound of a tremendous horn made
 him turn all his attention to the spot from which it came. He there discovered, through the dusk, what seemed to be the towers of a city. Those are no towers, said his guide; they are giants,

¹ *F. Q.* Bk. 2, canto 7.⁴ *Inferno*, canto 25.² *F. Q.* 3. 10. 52-60.⁵ *Gen.* 10. 9, 10.³ See pp. 14-16.

standing up to the middle in one of these circular pits : —

- Come quando la nebbia si dissipa,
 Lo sguardo a poco a poco raffigura
 5 Ciò che cela il vapor, che l' aere stipa;
 Così forando l' aura grossa e scura,
 Più e più appressando in vèr la sponda,
 Fuggémi errore, e giungémi¹ paura:
 Pero chè come in su la cerchia tonda
 10 Montereccion di torri si corona;
 Così la proda, che il pozzo circonda,
 Torreggiavan di mezza la persona
 Gli orribili giganti, cui minaccia
 Giove del cielo ancora quando tuona.
 15 Ed io scorgeva già d' alcun la faccia,
 Le spalle, e il petto, e del ventre gran parte,
 E per le coste giù ambo le braccia.
 * * * * *
 La faccia sua mi pareva lunga e grossa,
 Come la pina di San Pietro a Roma;
 20 E a sua proporzione eran l' altre ossa.
 * * * * *
 'Rafel mai amech zabi almi !'
 Cominciò a gridar la fiera bocca,
 Cui non si convenían più dolci salmi.
 E il duca mio vèr lui: 'Anima sciocca !
 25 Tienti col corno, e con quel ti disfoga,
 Quand' ira o altra passion ti tocca.
 Cercati al collo, e troverai la soga
 Che il tien legato, o anima confusa,
 E vedi lui che il gran petto ti dogà.'
 30 Poi disse a me: 'Egli stesso s' accusa:
 Questi è Nembrotto, per lo cui mal coto
 Pure un linguaggio nel mondo non s' usa.

¹ Scartazzini and some others prefer 'crescémi.'

Lasciamlo stare, e non parliamo a voto;
 Chè così è a lui ciascun linguaggio,
 Come il suo ad altrui, che a nullo è noto.'¹

I looked again: and as the eye makes out,
 By little and little, what the mist concealed, 5
 In which, till clearing up, the sky was steeped;
 So, looming through the gross and darksome air,
 As we drew nigh, those mighty bulks grew plain,
 And error quitted me, and terror joined:
 For in like manner as all round its height 10
 Montereccione crowns itself with towers,
 So towered above the circuit of that pit,
 Though but half out of it, and half within,
 The horrible giants that fought Jove, and still
 Are threatened when he thunders. As we neared 15
 The foremost, I discerned his mighty face,
 His shoulders, breast, and more than half his trunk,
 With both the arms down hanging by the sides.
 His face appeared to me, in length and breadth,
 Huge as St. Peter's pinnacle at Rome, 20
 And of a like proportion all his bones.
 He opened, as we went, his dreadful mouth,
 Fit for no sweeter psalmody; and shouted
 After us, in the words of some strange tongue,
 'Ràfel ma-èe amech zabèe almee!—' 25
 'Dull wretch!' my leader cried, 'keep to thine horn,
 And so vent better whatsoever rage
 Or other passion stuff thee. Feel thy throat
 And find the chain upon thee, thou confusion!
 Lo! what a hoop is clenched about thy gorge.' 30
 Then turning to myself, he said, 'His howl
 Is its own mockery. This is Nimrod, he
 Through whose ill thought it was that humankind

¹ *Inf.* 31. 34-81. Hunt inserts the reference after the quotation.

Were tongue-confounded. Pass him, and say naught:
 For as he speaketh language known of none,
 So none can speak save jargon to himself.¹

Assuredly it could not have been easy to find a fiction so uncouthly terrible as this in the hypochondria of Hamlet. Even his father had evidently seen no such ghost in the other world. All his phantoms were in the world he had left. Timon, Lear, Richard, Brutus, Prospero, Macbeth himself, none of Shakespeare's men had, in fact, any thought but of the earth they lived on, whatever supernatural fancy crossed them. The thing fancied was still a thing of this world, 'in its habit as it lived,'² or no remoter acquaintance
 15 than a witch or a fairy. Its lowest depths (unless Dante suggested them) were the cellars under the stage. Caliban himself is a cross-breed between a witch and a clown. No offence to Shakespeare; who was not bound to be the greatest of healthy
 20 poets, and to have every morbid inspiration besides. What he might have done, had he set his wits to compete with Dante, I know not; all I know is, that in the infernal line he did nothing like him; and it is not to be wished he had. It
 25 is far better that, as a higher, more universal, and more beneficent variety of the genus Poet, he should have been the happier man he was, and left us the plump cheeks on his monument, instead of the carking visage of the great, but
 30 over-serious, and comparatively one-sided Floren-

¹ Cf. the prose translation by Norton. ² *Haml.* 3. 4. 135.

tine. Even the imagination of Spenser, whom we take to have been a 'nervous gentleman' compared with Shakespeare, was visited with no such dreams as Dante. Or, if it was, he did not choose to make himself thinner (as Dante says *he* did) 5 with dwelling upon them. He had twenty visions of nymphs and bowers, to one of the mud of Tartarus.¹ Chaucer, for all he was 'a man of this world' as well as the poets' world, and as great, perhaps a greater enemy of oppression than 10 Dante, besides being one of the profoundest masters of pathos that ever lived, had not the heart to conclude the story of the famished father and his children, as finished by the inexorable anti-Pisan.² But enough of Dante in this place. 15 Hobbes, in order to daunt the reader from objecting to his friend Davenant's want of invention, says of these fabulous creations in general, in his letter prefixed to the poem of Gondibert, that 'impenetrable armors, enchanted castles, invul- 20 nerable bodies, iron men, flying horses, and a thousand other such things, [which]³ are easily feigned by them that dare.' These are girds at Spenser and Ariosto. But, with leave of Hobbes (who translated Homer as if on purpose to show 25 what execrable verses could be written by a philosopher), enchanted castles and flying horses are not easily feigned, as Ariosto and Spenser feigned them; and that just makes all the difference. For proof, see the accounts of Spenser's en- 30

¹ Cf. *F. Q.* I. 5. 33.² *Inf.* 33. 1-90; *Monk's Tale*.³ Hunt omits 'which.'

chanted castle in Book the Third, Canto Twelfth, of the Fairy Queen; and let the reader of Italian open the Orlando Furioso at its first introduction of the Hippogriff,¹ where Bradamante, coming to
 5 an inn, hears a great noise, and sees all the people looking up at something in the air; upon which, looking up herself, she sees a knight in shining armor riding towards the sunset upon a creature with variegated wings, and then dipping and dis-
 10 appearing among the hills.² Chaucer's steed of brass, that was

So horsly and so quik of ye,³

is copied from the life. You might pat him and feel his brazen muscles. Hobbes, in objecting to
 15 what he thought childish, made a childish mistake. His criticism is just such as a boy might pique himself upon, who was educated on mechanical principles, and thought he had outgrown his Goody Two-shoes. With a wonderful dimness of
 20 discernment in poetic matters, considering his acuteness in others, he fancies he has settled the question by pronouncing such creations 'impossible!' To the brazier they are impossible, no

¹ 4. 4. Hunt introduces the reference, parenthetically, into the text, but wrongly, as 3. 4.

² The prototype of the Hippogriff is Pegasus, for which see Hawthorne's *Tanglewood Tales*, The Chimæra. The earliest mention of Pegasus is in Hesiod. Chaucer recognizes the likeness of his horse of brass to Pegasus (*Clerk's Tale* 207-208):

And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
 The hors that hadde winges for to flee.

³ *Squire's Tale* 194.

doubt; but not to the poet. Their possibility, if the poet wills it, is to be conceded; the problem is, the creature being given, how to square its actions with probability, according to the nature assumed of it. Hobbes did not see that the skill 5 and beauty of these fictions lay in bringing them within those very regions of truth and likelihood in which he thought they could not exist. Hence the serpent Python of Chaucer,

Slepyng agayn¹ the sonne upon a day,² 10

when Apollo slew him. Hence the chariot-drawing dolphins³ of Spenser, softly swimming along the shore lest they should hurt themselves against the stones and gravel. Hence Shakespeare's Ariel, living under blossoms, and riding at even- 15 ing on the bat; and his domestic namesake⁴ in the Rape of the Lock (the imagination of the drawing-room) saving a lady's petticoat from the coffee with his plumes, and directing atoms of snuff into a coxcomb's nose. In the Orlando 20 Furioso⁵ is a wild story of a cannibal necromancer, who laughs at being cut to pieces, coming together again like quicksilver, and picking up his head when it is cut off, sometimes by the hair, sometimes by the nose! This, which would 25 be purely childish and ridiculous in the hands of an inferior poet, becomes interesting, nay grand,

¹ Hunt, 'against.'

² *Manciple's Tale* 6.

³ *F. Q.* 3. 4. 33, 34.

⁴ Not he, but his legions; see 3. 115; 5. 83.

⁵ 15. 65. Hunt introduces the reference in parenthesis.

in Ariosto's, from the beauties of his style, and its conditional truth to nature. The monster has a fated hair on his head—a single hair¹—which must be taken from it before he can be killed.

5 Decapitation itself is of no consequence, without that proviso. The Paladin Astolfo, who has fought this phenomenon on horseback, and succeeded in getting the head and galloping off with it, is therefore still at a loss what to be at. How

10 is he to discover such a needle in such a bottle of hay? The trunk is spurring after him to recover it, and he seeks for some evidence of the hair in vain. At length he bethinks him of scalping the head. He does so; and the moment the opera-

15 tion arrives at the place of the hair, *the face of the head becomes pale, the eyes turn in their sockets,* and the lifeless pursuer tumbles from his horse:

Si fece il viso allor pallido e brutto,
 Travolse gli occhi, e dimostrò all' occaso
 20 Per manifesti segni esser condotto;
 E 'l busto che seguia troncato al collo,
 Di sella cadde, e diè l' ultimo crollo.²

Then grew the visage pale, and deadly wet,
 The eyes turned in their sockets, drearily;
 25 And all things show'd the villain's sun was set.
 His trunk that was in chase, fell from its horse,
 And, giving the last shudder, was a corse.

It is thus, and thus only, by making Nature his companion wherever he goes, even in the most

¹ Apparently a reminiscence of Virgil, *Georg.* i. 404 ff.; Ovid, *Metamorph.* 8. 1 ff.; or the pseudo-Virgilian *Ciris*.

² *Orl. Fur.* 15. 87.

supernatural region, that the poet, in the words of a very instructive phrase, takes the world along with him. It is true, he must not (as the Platonists would say) humanize weakly or mistakenly in that region; otherwise he runs the chance of forgetting to be true to the supernatural itself, and so betraying a want of imagination from that quarter. His nymphs will have no taste of their woods and waters; his gods and goddesses be only so many fair or frowning ladies and gentlemen, such as we see in ordinary paintings; he will be in no danger of having his angels likened to a sort of wild-fowl, as Rembrandt has made them in his *Jacob's Dream*. His Bacchuses will never remind us, like Titian's, of the force and fury, as well as of the graces of wine. His Jupiter will reduce no females to ashes; his fairies be nothing fantastical; his gnomes, not 'of the earth, earthy.'¹ And this again will be wanting to Nature; for it will be wanting to the supernatural, as Nature would have made it, working in a supernatural direction. Nevertheless, the poet, even for imagination's sake, must not become a bigot to imaginative truth, dragging it down into the region of the mechanical and the limited, and losing sight of its paramount privilege, which is to make beauty, in a human sense, the lady and queen of the universe. He would gain nothing by making his ocean-nymphs mere fishy creatures, upon the plea that such only could live in the

¹ 1 Cor. 15. 47.

water; his wood-nymphs with faces of knotted oak; his angels without breath and song, because no lungs could exist between the earth's atmosphere and the empyrean. The Grecian tendency
5 in this respect is safer than the Gothic; nay, more imaginative; for it enables us to imagine *beyond* imagination, and to bring all things healthily round to their only present final ground of sympathy—the human. When we go to heaven,
10 we may idealize in a superhuman mode, and have altogether different notions of the beautiful; but till then we must be content with the loveliest capabilities of earth. The sea-nymphs of Greece were still beautiful women, though they lived in the
15 water. The gills and fins of the ocean's natural inhabitants were confined to their lowest semi-human attendants; or if Triton himself was not quite human, it was because he represented the fiercer part of the vitality of the seas, as they did
20 the fairer.

To conclude this part of my subject, I will quote from the greatest of all narrative writers two passages;—one exemplifying the imagination which brings supernatural things to bear on
25 earthly, without confounding them; the other that which paints events and circumstances after real life. The first is where Achilles, who has long absented himself from the conflict between his countrymen and the Trojans, has had a message from heaven bidding him reappear in the
30 enemy's sight, standing outside the camp-wall

upon the trench, but doing nothing more; that is to say, taking no part in the fight. He is simply to be seen. The two armies down by the sea-side are contending which shall possess the body of Patroclus; and the mere sight of the 5 dreadful Grecian chief — supernaturally indeed impressed upon them, in order that nothing may be wanting to the full effect of his courage and conduct upon courageous men — is to determine the question. We are to imagine a slope of 10 ground towards the sea, in order to elevate the trench; the camp is solitary; the battle ('a dreadful roar of men,' as Homer calls it) is raging on the sea-shore; and the goddess Iris has just delivered her message and disappeared:— 15

Αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς ὦρτο διίφιλος· ἀμφὶ δ' Ἀθήνη
 ὦμοις ἰφθίμοισι βάλ' αἰγίδα θυσσανόεσσαν·
 Ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ κεφαλῇ νέφος ἔστεφε δῖα θεάων
 Χρύσειον, ἐκ δ' αὐτοῦ δαΐε φλόγα παμφανόωσαν.
 Ὡς δ' ὅτε καπνὸς ἰὼν ἐξ ἄστεος αἰθέρ' ἵκηται 20
 Τηλόθεν ἐκ νήσου, τὴν δῆϊοι ἀμφιμάχωνται,
 Οἷ τε πανημέριοι στρυγερῷ κρίνονται Ἀργεῖ
 Ἄστεος ἐκ σφετέρου· ἅμα δ' ἠελίῳ καταδύντι
 Πυρσοὶ τε φλεγέθουσιν ἐπήτριμοι, ὑψόσε δ' αὐγὴ
 Γίγνεται αἰσσοῦσα, περικτιόνεσσιν ἰδέσθαι, 25
 Αἷ κέν πως σὺν νηυσὶν ἄρῃς ἀλκτῆρες ἱκωνται·
 Ὡς ἀπ' Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλῆς σέλας αἰθέρ' ἵκανεν.

Στῇ δ' ἐπὶ τάφρον ἰὼν ἀπὸ τείχεος, οὐδ' ἐς Ἀχαιοὺς
 Μίσγετο· μητρὸς γάρ πυκινὴν ὠπίζετ' ἐφετμήν.
 Ἐνθα στὰς ἦυσ' ἀπάτερθε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη 30
 Φθέγγατ'· ἀτὰρ Τρώεσσιν ἐν ἄσπετον ὦρσε κυδοιμόν.

- Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀριζήλη φωνή, ὅτε τ' ἴαχε σάλπιγξ
 Ἄστυ περιπλομένων δηίων ὑπὸ θυμοραϊστέων ·
 Ὡς τότε ἀριζήλη φωνή γένετ' Αἰακίδαο.
 Οἱ δ' ὡς οὖν ἄϊον ὅπα χάλκεον Αἰακίδαο,
 5 Πᾶσιν ὀρίνθη θυμός · ἀτὰρ καλλίτριχες ἵπποι
 Ἄψ ὄχεα τρόπεον · ὅσσοντο γὰρ ἄλγεα θυμῷ.
 Ἠνιόχοι δ' ἔκπληγεν, ἐπεὶ ἴδον ἀκάματον πῦρ
 Δεινὸν ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς μεγαθύμου Πηλεΐωνος
 Δαιόμενον· τὸ δὲ δαΐε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.
 10 Τρὶς μὲν ὑπὲρ τάφρου μεγάλ' ἴαχε διὸς Ἀχιλλεύς,
 Τρὶς δ' ἐκυκλήθησαν Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ' ἐπίκουροι.
 Ἐνθα δὲ καὶ τότε ὄλοντο δυνώδεκα φῶτες ἄριστοι
 Ἀμφὶ σφοῖς ὀχέεσσι καὶ ἔγχεσιν.¹

- But up Achilles rose, the loved of heaven;
 15 And Pallas on his mighty shoulders cast
 The shield of Jove; and round about his head
 She put the glory of a golden mist,
 From which there burnt a fiery-flaming light.
 And as, when smoke goes heavenward from a town,
 20 In some far island which its foes besiege,
 Who all day long with dreadful martialness
 Have poured from their own town; soon as the sun
 Has set, thick lifted fires are visible,
 Which, rushing upward, make a light in the sky,
 25 And let the neighbors know, who may perhaps
 Bring help across the sea; so from the head
 Of great Achilles went up an effulgence.

- Upon the trench he stood, without the wall,
 But mixed not with the Greeks, for he revered
 30 His mother's word; and so, thus standing there,
 He shouted; and Minerva, to his shout,
 Added a dreadful cry; and there arose
 Among the Trojans an unspeakable tumult.

¹ *Il.* 18. 203-231. Hunt introduces the reference into the text.

And as the clear voice of a trumpet, blown
 Against the town by spirit-withering foes,
 So sprang the clear voice of Æacides.
 And when they heard the brazen cry, their hearts
 All leaped within them; and the proud-maned horses 5
 Ran with the chariots round, for they foresaw
 Calamity; and the charioteers were smitten,
 When they beheld the ever-active fire
 Upon the dreadful head of the great-minded one
 Burning; for bright-eyed Pallas made it burn. 10
 Thrice o'er the trench divine Achilles shouted;
 And thrice the Trojans and their great allies
 Rolled back; and twelve of all their noblest men
 Then perished, crushed by their own arms and chariots.

Of course there is no further question about the 15
 body of Patroclus. It is drawn out of the press,
 and received by the awful hero with tears.

The other passage is where Priam, kneeling
 before Achilles, and imploring him to give up the
 dead body of Hector, reminds him of his own 20
 father; who, whatever (says the poor old king)
 may be his troubles with his enemies, has the
 blessing of knowing that his son is still alive, and
 may daily hope to see him return. Achilles, in
 accordance with the strength and noble honesty 25
 of the passions in those times, weeps aloud him-
 self at this appeal, feeling, says Homer, 'desire'
 for his father in his very 'limbs.'¹ He joins in
 grief for the venerable sufferer, and can no longer
 withstand the look of his 'gray head and his gray 30
chin.' Observe the exquisite introduction of this
 last word. It paints the touching fact of the
 chin's being imploringly thrown upward by the

¹ But this line (514) is generally regarded as spurious.

kneeling old man, and the very motion of his beard as he speaks:—

- Ὡς ἄρα φωνήσας ἀπέβη πρὸς μακρὸν Ὀλύμπου
 Ἑρμείας· Πρίαμος δ' ἐξ ἵππων ἄλτο χαμᾶζε,
 5 Ἰδαῖον δὲ κατ' αὐθι λίπεν· ὁ δὲ μέμνεν ἐρύκων
 Ἴππους ἡμιόνοὺς τε· γέρων δ' ἰθὺς κίεν οἴκου,
 Τῇ ῥ' Ἀχιλεὺς ἴζεσκε, διίφιλος· ἐν δέ μιν αὐτὸν
 Εὐρ', ἔταροι δ' ἀπάνευθε καθεῖατο· τῷ δέ δὺ οἴῳ
 Ἦρωσ Αὐτομέδων τε, καὶ Ἀλκιμος ὄζος Ἄρηος,
 10 Ποίπνυν παρεόντε· νέον δ' ἀπέληγεν ἐδωδῆς,
 Ἔσθων καὶ πίνων, ἔτι καὶ παρέκειτο τράπεζα·
 Τοὺς δ' ἔλαθ' εἰσελθὼν Πρίαμος μέγας, ἄγχι δ' ἄρα στὰς,
 Χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος λάβε γούνατα, καὶ κύσε χεῖρας
 Δεινὰς, ἀνδροφόνους, αἷ οἱ πολέας κτάνον υἱας.
 15 Ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἄνδρ' ἄτη πυκινὴ λάβῃ, ὅστ', ἐνὶ πάτρῃ
 Φῶτα κατακτείνας, ἄλλον ἐξίκετο δῆμον,
 Ἀνδρὸς ἐς ἀφνειοῦ, θάμβος δ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντας·
 Ὡς Ἀχιλεὺς θάμβησεν, ἰδὼν Πριάμον θεοειδέα·
 Θάμβησαν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοι, ἐς ἀλλήλους δὲ ἴδοντο.
 20 Τὸν καὶ λισσόμενος Πρίαμος πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν.

- Μνήσαι πατρὸς σοῖο, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ' Ἀχιλλεῦ,
 Τηλίκου, ὥσπερ ἐγὼν, ὀλοῶ ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ.
 Καὶ μὲν που κεῖνον περιναίεται ἀμφὶς ἐόντες
 Τείρουσ', οὐδέ τις ἐστὶν, ἀρὴν καὶ λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι·
 25 Ἀλλ' ἢ τοι κεῖνός γε, σέθεν ζῶοντος ἀκούων,
 Χαίρει τ' ἐν θυμῷ, ἐπὶ τ' ἔλπεται ἥματα πάντα
 Ὅψεσθαι φίλον υἱὸν, ἀπὸ Τροίῃθεν ἰόντα·
 Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέκον υἱας ἀρίστους
 Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ' οὐ τινὰ φημι λελείφθαι.
 30 Πεντήκοντά μοι ἦσαν, ὅτ' ἤλυθον υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν·
 Ἐννεακαίδεκα μὲν μοι ἦς ἐκ νηδύος ἦσαν,
 Τοὺς δ' ἄλλους μοι ἔτικτον ἐνὶ μεγάροισι γυναῖκες.
 Τῶν μὲν πολλῶν θοῦρος Ἄρης ὑπὸ γούνατ' ἔλυσεν·
 Ὅς δέ μοι οἶος ἔην, εἴρυτο δὲ ἄστυ καὶ αὐτοὺς,

Τὸν σὺν πρώην κτείνας, ἄμυνόμενον περὶ πάτρης,
 Ἑκτορα· τοῦ νῦν εἵνεχ' ἱκάνω νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,
 Λυσόμενος παρὰ σείῳ, φέρω δ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα.
 Ἄλλ' αἰδέοιο θεοὺς, Ἀχιλῆϊ, αὐτόν τ' ἐλέησον,
 Μνησάμενος σοῦ πατρός· ἐγὼ δ' ἐλεεινότερός περ, 5
 Ἑτλην δ', οἷ' οὐπω τις ἐπιχθόνιος βροτὸς ἄλλος,
 Ἄνδρὸς παιδοφόνιοι ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ' ὀρέγεσθαι.
 Ὡς φάτο· τῷ δ' ἄρα πατὴρ υῖφ' ἕμερον ὦρσε γόοιο,
 Ἀψάμενος δ' ἄρα χειρὸς, ἀπώσατο ἦκα γέροντα.
 Τῷ δὲ μνησαμένῳ, ὃ μὲν Ἑκτορὸς ἀνδροφόνιοι, 10
 Κλαῖ' ἀδινά, προπάρειθε ποδῶν Ἀχιλλῆος ἐλυσθείς·
 Αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς κλαῖεν ἐὼν πατέρ', ἄλλοτε δ' αὖτε
 Πάτροκλον· τῶν δὲ στοναχὴ κατὰ δῶματ' ὀρώρει.
 Αὐτὰρ, ἐπεὶ ῥα γόοιο τετάρπετο διὸς Ἀχιλλεὺς,
 [Καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ πραπίδων ἦλθ' ἕμερος, ἡδ' ἀπὸ γυῖων,] 15
 Αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ θρόνου ὦρτο, γέροντα δὲ χειρὸς ἀνίστη,
 Οἰκτείρων πολὺν τε κάρη, πολὺν τε γένειον.¹

So saying, Mercury vanished up to heaven;
 And Priam then alighted from his chariot,
 Leaving Idæus with it, who remained 20
 Holding the mules and horses; and the old man
 Went straight indoors, where the beloved of Jove
 Achilles sat, and found him. In the room
 Were others, but apart; and two alone,
 The hero Automedon, and Alcimus, 25
 A branch of Mars, stood by him. They had been
 At meals, and had not yet removed the board.
 Great Priam came, without their seeing him,
 And kneeling down, he clasped Achilles' knees,
 And kissed those terrible, homicidal hands, 30
 Which had deprived him of so many sons.
 And as a man who is pressed heavily
 For having slain another, flies away
 To foreign lands, and comes into the house

¹ *Il.* 24. 468-516. As in 24, note.

- Of some great man, and is beheld with wonder,
So did Achilles wonder to see Priam;
And the rest wondered, looking at each other.
But Priam, praying to him, spoke these words:—
5 'God-like Achilles, think of thine own father!
To the same age have we both come, the same
Weak pass; and though the neighboring chiefs may vex
Him also, and his borders find no help,
Yet when he hears that thou art still alive,
10 He gladdens inwardly, and daily hopes
To see his dear son coming back from Troy.
But I, bereaved old Priam! I had once
Brave sons in Troy, and now I cannot say
That one is left me. Fifty children had I,
15 When the Greeks came, nineteen were of one womb;
The rest my women bore me in my house.
The knees of many of these fierce Mars has loosened;
And he who had no peer, Troy's prop and theirs,
Him hast thou killed now, fighting for his country,
20 Hector; and for his sake am I come here
To ransom him, bringing a countless ransom.
But thou, Achilles, fear the gods, and think
Of thine own father, and have mercy on me:
For I am much more wretched, and have borne
25 What never mortal bore, I think, on earth,
To lift unto my lips the hand of him
Who slew my boys.'

- He ceased; and there arose
Sharp longing in Achilles for his father;
30 And taking Priam by the hand, he gently
Put him away; for both shed tears to think
Of other times; the one, most bitter ones
For Hector, and with wilful wretchedness
Lay right before Achilles: and the other,
35 For his own father now, and now his friend;
And the whole house might hear them as they moaned.

But when divine Achilles had refreshed
His soul with tears, and sharp desire had left
His heart and limbs, he got up from his throne,
And raised the old man by the hand, and took
Pity on his gray head and his gray chin.

5

O lovely and immortal privilege of genius! that can stretch its hand out of the wastes of time, thousands of years back, and touch our eyelids with tears. In these passages there is not a word which a man of the most matter-of-fact understand- 10
ing might not have written, *if he had thought of it*. But in poetry, feeling and imagination are necessary to the perception and presentation even of matters of fact. They, and they only, see what is proper to be told, and what to be kept back; 15
what is pertinent, affecting, and essential. Without feeling, there is a want of delicacy and distinction; without imagination there is no true embodiment. In poets, even good of their kind, but without a genius for narration, the action 20
would have been encumbered or diverted with ingenious mistakes. The over-contemplative would have given us too many remarks; the over-lyrical, a style too much carried away; the over-fanciful, conceits and too many similes; the unimagina- 25
tive, the facts without the feeling, and not even those. We should have been told nothing of the 'gray chin,' of the house hearing them as they moaned, or of Achilles gently putting the old man aside; much less of that yearning for his 30
father, which made the hero tremble in every limb.

Writers without the greatest passion and power do not feel in this way, nor are capable of expressing the feeling; though there is enough sensibility and imagination all over the world to enable
 5 mankind to be moved by it, when the poet strikes his truth into their hearts.

The reverse of imagination is exhibited in pure absence of ideas, in commonplaces, and, above all, in conventional metaphor, or such images and
 10 their phraseology as have become the common property of discourse and writing. Addison's Cato is full of them: —

Passion unpitied and successful love
*Plant daggers in my heart.*¹

15 I've sounded my Numidians, man by man,
 And find 'em *ripe for a revolt.*²

The virtuous Marcia *towers above her sex.*³

Of the same kind is his 'courting the yoke' — 'distracting my very soul'⁴ — 'calling up all'
 20 one's 'father' in one's soul — 'working every nerve' — 'copying a bright example';⁵ in short the whole play, relieved now and then with a smart sentence or turn of words. The following is a pregnant example of plagiarism and weak
 25 writing. It is from another tragedy of Addison's time, — the *Mariamne* of Fenton: —

¹ I. I. Hunt has 'breast' for 'heart.'

³ I. 4.

⁴ Hunt writes 'heart.'

² I. 3.

⁵ All from I. I.

Mariamne, *with superior charms,*
Triumphs o'er reason; in her look she bears
 A paradise of ever-blooming sweets;
 Fair as the first idea beauty *prints*
 In the young lover's soul; a winning grace
 Guides every gesture, and obsequious love
Attends on all her steps.

5

'Triumphing o'er reason' is an old acquaintance of everybody's. 'Paradise in her look' is from the Italian poets through Dryden. 'Fair as the first
 idea,' &c., is from Milton,¹ spoilt; 'winning grace' and 'steps' from Milton² and Tibullus,³ both spoilt. Whenever beauties are stolen by such a writer, they are sure to be spoilt; just as when a great writer borrows, he improves.

15

To come now to Fancy,—she is a younger sister of Imagination, without the other's weight of thought and feeling. Imagination indeed, purely so called, is all feeling; the feeling of the subtlest and most affecting analogies; the percep-
 tion of sympathies in the natures of things, or in their popular attributes. Fancy is a sporting with their resemblance, real or supposed, and with airy and fantastical creations:—

— Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
 Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane,
*Be shook to air.*⁴

25

¹ *P. L.* 7. 557.

² *P. L.* 8. 61, 489.

³ *Tibullus* 4. 2. 7–8.

⁴ *Troilus and Cressida* 3. 3. 222–225. As in 24, note.

That is imagination;—the strong mind sympathizing with the strong beast, and the weak love identified with the weak dew-drop.

And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;
 5 *A very beadle to a humorous sigh;*
 A domineering pedant o'er the boy;

* * * * *

This whimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;
 This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;
Regent of love-rimes, lord of folded arms,
 10 *The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans, &c.²*

That is fancy;—a combination of images not in their nature connected, or brought together by the feeling, but by the will and pleasure; and having just enough hold of analogy to betray it
 15 into the hands of its smiling subjector.

Silent icicles

Quietly shining to the quiet moon.³

That, again, is imagination — analogical sympathy; and exquisite of its kind it is.

20 You are now sailed *into the north of my lady's opinion;*
 where you will hang *like an icicle on a Dutchman's beard,*
 unless you do redeem it by some laudable attempt.⁴

And that is fancy;—one image capriciously suggested by another, and but half connected with
 25 the subject of discourse; nay, half opposed to

¹ One line omitted, but no break indicated by Hunt.

² *Love's Labor's Lost* 3. 1. 176-184. As in 24, note. Hunt introduces the quotation with an 'Oh!' which is not in Shakespeare.

³ Coleridge's *Frost at Midnight*. As in 24, note.

⁴ *Twelfth Night* 3. 2. 28-31. As in 24, note.

it; for in the gaiety of the speaker's animal spirits, the 'Dutchman's beard' is made to represent the lady!

Imagination belongs to Tragedy, or the serious muse; Fancy to the comic. Macbeth, Lear, 5 Paradise Lost, the poem of Dante, are full of imagination: the Midsummer Night's Dream and the Rape of the Lock, of fancy: Romeo and Juliet, the Tempest, the Fairy Queen, and the Orlando Furioso, of both. The terms were 10 formerly identical, or used as such; and neither is the best that might be found. The term Imagination is too confined; often too material. It presents too invariably the idea of a solid body—of 'images' in the sense of the plaster- 15 cast cry about the streets. Fancy, on the other hand, while it means nothing but a spiritual image or apparition (*φάντασμα*, appearance, *phantom*), has rarely that freedom from visibility which is one of the highest privileges of imagina- 20 tion. Viola, in Twelfth Night, speaking of some beautiful music, says:—

It gives a very echo to the seat
Where Love is throned.¹

In this charming thought, fancy and imagination 25 are combined; yet the fancy, the assumption of Love's sitting on a throne, is the image of a solid body; while the imagination, the sense of sympathy between the passion of love and impassioned music, presents us no image at all. Some 30

¹ 2. 4. 21-22. .

new term is wanting to express the more spiritual sympathies of what is called Imagination.

One of the teachers of Imagination is Melancholy; and like Melancholy, as Albert Dürer has painted her, she looks out among the stars, and is busied with spiritual affinities and the mysteries of the universe. Fancy turns her sister's wizard instruments into toys. She takes a telescope in her hand, and puts a mimic star on her forehead, and sallies forth as an emblem of astronomy. Her tendency is to the childlike and sportive. She chases butterflies, while her sister takes flight with angels. She is the genius of fairies, of gallantries, of fashions; of whatever is quaint and light, showy and capricious; of the poetical part of wit. She adds wings and feelings to the images of wit; and delights as much to people nature with smiling ideal sympathies, as wit does to bring antipathies together, and make them strike light on absurdity. Fancy, however, is not incapable of sympathy with Imagination. She is often found in her company; always, in the case of the greatest poets; often in that of less, though with them she is the greater favorite. Spenser has great imagination and fancy too, but more of the latter; Milton both also, the very greatest, but with imagination predominant; Chaucer the strongest imagination of real life, beyond any writers but Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare, and in comic painting inferior to none; Pope has hardly any imagination, but he has a great deal

of fancy; Coleridge little fancy, but imagination exquisite. Shakespeare alone, of all poets that ever lived, enjoyed the regard of both in equal perfection. A whole fairy poem of his writing will be found in the present volume.¹ See also 5 his famous description of Queen Mab and her equipage, in *Romeo and Juliet*:²—

Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs,
The cover of the wings of grasshoppers,
The ³ traces of the smallest spider's web, 10
The collars of the moonshine's watery beams, &c.

That is Fancy, in its playful creativeness. As a small but pretty rival specimen, less known, take the description of a fairy palace from Drayton's *Nymphidia*:— 15

This palace standeth in the air,
By necromancy placèd there,
That it no tempests ⁴ needs to fear,
Which way soe'er it blow it:
And somewhat southward tow'rd the noon, 20
Whence lies a way up to the moon,
And thence the Fairy can as soon
Pass to the earth below it.
The walls of spiders' legs are made,
Well mortisèd and finely laid; 25
He was the master of his trade,
It curiously that builded:

¹ Meaning *The Quarrel of Oberon and Titania*, which Hunt extracts from the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and prints in the volume to which this essay serves as introduction.

² I. 4. 59–62.

³ In this and the following line Hunt prints 'Her.' 'The' is Pope's emendation.

⁴ Hunt, 'tempest.'

The windows of the eyes of cats :

(because they see best at night,)

And for the roof, instead of slats,
Is covered with the skins of bats

5 *With moonshine that are gilded.*

Here also is a fairy bed, very delicate, from the same poet's Muse's Elysium:¹—

Of leaves of roses, *white and red*,
Shall be the covering of her ² bed;
10 The curtains, vallens, tester all
Shall be the flower imperial;
And for the fringe, it all along
With azure harebells shall be hung.
Of lilies shall the pillows be,
15 *With down stuf of the butterfly.*

Of fancy, so full of gusto as to border on imagination, Sir John Suckling, in his Ballad upon³ a Wedding, has given some of the most playful and charming specimens in the language.
20 They glance like twinkles of the eye, or cherries bedewed:—

Her feet beneath her petticoat
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light;
25 But oh! she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter Day
Is half so fine a sight.

It is very daring, and has a sort of playful grandeur, to compare a lady's dancing with the
30 sun. But as the sun has it all to himself in

¹ *Nymphal* 8, Cloris' first speech.

² Hunt, 'the.'

³ Hunt, 'on.'

the heavens, so she, in the blaze of her beauty, on earth. This is imagination fairly displacing fancy. The following has enchanted everybody:—

Her lips were red, *and one was thin* 5
*Compared to*¹ *that was next her chin,*
Some bee had stung it newly.

Every reader has stolen a kiss at that lip, gay or grave.

With regard to the principle of Variety in 10
 Uniformity by which verse ought to be modulated, and oneness of impression diversely produced, it has been contended by some that Poetry need not be written in verse at all; that prose is as good a medium, provided poetry be 15
 conveyed through it; and that to think otherwise is to confound letter with spirit, or form with essence. But the opinion is a prosaical mistake. Fitness and unfitness for *song*, or metrical excitement, just make all the difference between a 20
 poetical and prosaical subject; and the reason why verse is necessary to the form of poetry is that the perfection of poetical spirit demands it; —that the circle of its enthusiasm, beauty, and power, is incomplete without it. I do not mean 25
 to say that a poet can never show himself a poet in prose; but that, being one, his desire and necessity will be to write in verse; and that, if he were unable to do so, he would not, and could not, deserve his title. Verse to the true poet is 30

¹ Hunt, 'with.'

no clog. It is idly called a trammel and a difficulty. It is a help. It springs from the same enthusiasm as the rest of his impulses, and is necessary to their satisfaction and effect.

5 Verse is no more a clog than the condition of rushing upward is a clog to fire, or than the roundness and order of the globe we live on is a clog to the freedom and variety that abound within its sphere. Verse is no dominator over

10 the poet, except inasmuch as the bond is reciprocal, and the poet dominates over the verse. They are lovers, playfully challenging each other's rule, and delighted equally to rule and to obey. Verse is the final proof to the poet that his

15 mastery over his art is complete. It is the shutting up of his powers in '*measureful content*';¹ the answer of form to his spirit; of strength and ease to his guidance. It is the willing action, the proud and fiery happiness, of

20 the winged steed on whose back he has vaulted,

To² witch the world with noble³ horsemanship.⁴

Verse, in short, is that finishing, and rounding, and 'tuneful planeting' of the poet's creations, which is produced of necessity by the smooth

25 tendencies of their energy or inward working, and the harmonious dance into which they are attracted round the orb of the beautiful. Poetry, in its complete sympathy with beauty, must of

¹ Adapted from *Macbeth* 2. 1. 17, 'measureless content.'

² Shakespeare has 'and.'

³ Hunt, 'wondrous.'

⁴ 1 *Henry IV.* 4. 1. 110.

necessity leave no sense of the beautiful, and no power over its forms, unmanifested; and verse flows as inevitably from this condition of its integrity, as other laws of proportion do from any other kind of embodiment of beauty (say that of the human figure), however free and various the movements may be that play within their limits. What great poet ever wrote his poems in prose? or where is a good prose poem, of any length, to be found?¹ The poetry of the Bible is understood to be in verse, in the original.² Mr. Hazlitt has said a good word for those prose enlargements of some fine old song, which are known by the name of Ossian;³ and in passages they deserve what he said; but he judiciously abstained from saying anything about the form. Is Gesner's Death of Abel a poem? or Hervey's Meditations? The Pilgrim's Progress has been called one; and undoubtedly Bunyan had a genius which tended to make him a poet, and one of no mean order: and yet it was of as ungenerous and low a sort as was compatible with so lofty an affinity; and this is the reason why it stopped where it did. He had a craving after the beautiful, but not enough of it in himself to echo to its music. On the other hand, the possession of the beautiful will not be sufficient without force to utter it. The

¹ But cf. Sidney's *Defense of Poesy* ll 8-25; Shelley's *Defense* 7 33-107.

² Cf. my edition of *The Bible and English Prose Style*, pp. liv-lviii.

³ Hazlitt, *Lectures on the English Poets*, close of chap. 1.

author of *Telemachus*¹ had a soul full of beauty and tenderness. He was not a man who, if he had had a wife and children, would have run away from them, as Bunyan's hero did, to get a place
 5 by himself in heaven. He was 'a little lower than the angels,'² like our own Bishop Jewells³ and Berkeleys;⁴ and yet he was no poet. He was too delicately, not to say feebly, absorbed in his devotions to join in the energies of the
 10 seraphic choir.

Every poet, then, is a versifier; every fine poet an excellent one; and he is the best whose verse exhibits the greatest amount of strength, sweetness, straightforwardness, unsuperfluity,
 15 *variety*, and *oneness*; — oneness, that is to say, consistency, in the general impression, metrical and moral; and variety, or every pertinent diversity of tone and rhythm, in the process.

Strength is the muscle of verse, and shows
 20 itself in the number and force of the marked syllables; as,

Sonorous métal blowing martial sounds.⁵

¹ Fénelon (1661–1715).

² Ps. 8. 5; Heb. 2. 7.

³ See the testimonies to his worth in Russell's *Book of Authors* (Chandos Classics), p. 21.

⁴ Bishop Atterbury said of him: 'So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility I did not think had been the portion of any but angels until I saw this gentleman.' Pope's lines are well known:

'Manners with candor are to Benson given,
 To Berkeley every virtue under heaven.'

⁵ *P. L.* 1. 540. Hunt gives only 'Paradise Lost' in the text.

Behèmoth, bìggest born of èàrth, ùphèaved
His vástness.¹

Blòw, wìnds, and cràck your chèeks! ràge! blòw!
You càtäräcts and hurricànoes, spòut
Till you have drènc'h'd our stèeples, dròwn'd the còcks! 5
You sùlphurous and thought-èxecuting fires,
Vaùnt-còurièrs to òak-clèaving thùnderbòlts,
Sìnge my white hèad! And thòu, àll-shàking thùnder,
Smite² fàt the thìck rotùndity o' the wòrld!³

Unexpected locations of the accent double this 10
force, and render it characteristic of passion and
abruptness. And here comes into play the
reader's corresponding fineness of ear, and his
retardations and accelerations in accordance with
those of the poet:—

15

Then in the keyhole turns
The intrìcâte wards, and every bolt and bar
[Of massy iron or solid rock with ease]⁴
Unfastens. On ä süddën òpen fly
With ìmpètuòus recoil and jarring sound 20
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder.⁵

Abòmīnäblē, inùttērāblē,⁶ and worse
Than fables yet have feigned.⁷

25

Wallòwīng ūnwēldĭ, ĕnòrmous in their gait.⁸

Of unusual passionate accent, there is an
exquisite specimen in the *Fairy Queen*, where

¹ *P. L.* 7. 471-472. Hunt, 'Id.'

² Hunt, 'strike.'

³ *King Lear* 3. 2. 1-7. Hunt has 'Lear.'

⁴ Hunt omits without notice.

⁵ *P. L.* 2. 876-882. Hunt has 'Par. Lost, Book II.'

⁶ Hunt, 'unutterable.'

⁷ *P. L.* 2. 626-627. Hunt, 'Id.'

⁸ *P. L.* 7. 411.

Una is lamenting her desertion by the Red-Cross Knight:—

- But he, my Lyon, and my noble Lord,
How does he find in cruell hart to hate
5 Her, that him lov'd, and ever most adord
As the Godd of my lîfe? Why hath he me abhord?¹

See the whole stanza, with a note upon it, in the present volume.²

- The abuse of strength is harshness and heaviness; the reverse of it is weakness. There is a noble sentiment—it appears both in Daniel's and Sir John Beaumont's works, but is most probably the latter's—which is a perfect outrage of strength in the sound of the words:—

- 15 Only the firmest and the *constant'st* hearts
God sets to act the *stout'st* and hardest parts.³

Stout'st and *constant'st* for 'stoutest' and 'most constant!' It is as bad as the intentional crabbedness of the line in Hudibras:⁴—

- 20 He that hangs or *beats out's* brains,
The devil's in him if *he* feigns.

Beats out's brains, for 'beats out his brains.' Of heaviness, Davenant's Gondibert is a formidable specimen, almost throughout:—

- 25 With silence (òrder's help, and màrk of càre)
They chid⁵ thàt nòise which hèedless yòuth effèct;⁶
Still còurse for ùse, for heàlth thèy clèanlyness⁷ wèrè,
And sàve in wèllfixèd àrms, all nìceness chècked.

¹ *F. Q.* i. 3. 7.

² Cf. p. 35, note 1.

³ This quotation I have not succeeded in finding.

⁴ 2. 10. 497-498.

⁵ Hunt, 'chide.'

⁶ I Hunt, 'affect.'

⁷ Hunt, 'cleanness.'

Thèy thought, thòse that, unàrmed, expòsed fràil life,
 But nàked nàture vàliantly betràyed;
 Whò wàs, thòugh nàked, sàfe, till prìde màde'strife,
 But màde defènsè must ùse, nòw dànger's màde.¹

And so he goes digging and lumbering on, like a 5
 heavy preacher thumping the pulpit in italics, and
 spoiling many ingenious reflections.

Weakness in versification is want of accent and
 emphasis. It generally accompanies prosaical-
 ness, and is the consequence of weak thoughts, 10
 and of the affectation of a certain well-bred
 enthusiasm. The writings of the late Mr. Hayley
 were remarkable for it; and it abounds among the
 lyrical imitators of Cowley, and the whole of what
 is called our French school of poetry, when it 15
 aspired above its wit and 'sense.' It sometimes
 breaks down in a horrible, hopeless manner, as
 if giving way at the first step. The following
 ludicrous passage in Congreve, intended to be
 particularly fine, contains an instance:— 20

And lo! Silence himself is here;
 Methinks I see the midnight god appear.
 In all his downy pomp arrayed,
 Behold the reverend shade.

An ancient sigh he sits upon!!! 25
 Whose memory of sound is long since gone,
And purposely annihilated for his throne!!!²

See also the would-be enthusiasm of Addison
 about music:—

¹ Canto 3. sts. 8, 9.

² 'Ode on the singing of Mrs. Arabella Hunt.' Hunt inserts
 in text.

For ever consecrate the *day*
 To music and *Cecilia*;
 Music, the greatest good that mortals know,
 And all of heaven we have below,
 5 Music can noble HINTS *impart*!!!¹

It is observable that the unpoetic masters of
 ridicule are apt to make the most ridiculous
 mistakes, when they come to affect a strain
 higher than the one they are accustomed to.
 10 But no wonder. Their habits neutralize the
 enthusiasm it requires.

Sweetness, though not identical with smooth-
 ness, any more than feeling is with sound, always
 includes it; and smoothness is a thing so little to
 15 be regarded for its own sake, and indeed so worth-
 less in poetry, but for some taste of sweetness,
 that I have not thought necessary to mention it
 by itself; though such an all-in-all in versification
 was it regarded not a hundred years back, that
 20 Thomas Warton, himself an idolater of Spenser,
 ventured to wish the following line in the *Fairy*
Queen,

Yet² was admirèd much of fooles, *wòmen*, and boys³—
 altered to

25 Yet was admirèd much of women, fools, and boys—

thus destroying the fine scornful emphasis on the
 first syllable of 'women!' (an ungallant intima-

¹ *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day at Oxford*, str. 3.

² Hunt, 'And.'

³ *F. Q.* 5. 2. 30.

tion, by the way, against the fair sex, very startling in this no less woman-loving than great poet). Any poetaster can be smooth. Smoothness abounds in all small poets, as sweetness does in the greater. Sweetness is the smoothness of 5 grace and delicacy — of the sympathy with the pleasing and lovely. Spenser is full of it — Shakespeare — Beaumont and Fletcher — Coleridge. Of Spenser's and Coleridge's versification it is the prevailing characteristic. Its main 10 secrets are a smooth progression between variety and sameness, and a voluptuous sense of the continuous — 'linked sweetness long drawn out.'¹ Observe the first and last lines of the stanza in the Fairy Queen, describing a shepherd brushing 15 away the gnats; — the open and the close *e*'s in the one,

As gēntle shēpheard in swēēte ēventide² —

and the repetition of the word *oft*, and the fall from the vowel *a* into the two *u*'s in the other, — 20

He³ brusheth *oft*, and *oft* doth mār their mūrmūring.

So in his description of two substances in the handling, both equally smooth, —

*Each smoother seems than each, and each than each seems smoother.*⁴

25

An abundance of examples from his poetry will be found in the volume before us. His beauty revolves on itself with conscious loveliness. And

¹ *L'Allegro* 139.

³ Hunt, 'She.'

² *F. Q.* I. I. 23.

⁴ I have not found this.

Coleridge is worthy to be named with him, as the reader will see also, and has seen already. Let him take a sample meanwhile from the poem called the Day-Dream! Observe both the variety
 5 and sameness of the vowels, and the repetition of the soft consonants:—

My eyes make pictures when they are ¹ shut:—
 I see a fountain, large and fair,
 A willow and a ruined hut,
 10 And *thee* and *me* and Mary there.
O Mary! make thy gentle lap our pillow;
Bend o'er us, like a bower, my beautiful green willow.

By *Straightforwardness* is meant the flow of words in their natural order, free alike from mere
 15 prose, and from those inversions to which bad poets recur in order to escape the charge of prose, but chiefly to accommodate their rimes. In Shadwell's play of *Psyche*,² Venus gives the sisters of the heroine an answer, of which the
 20 following is the *entire* substance, literally, in so many words. The author had nothing better for her to say:—

I receive your prayers with kindness, and will give success to your hopes. I have seen, with anger, mankind adore
 25 your sister's beauty and deplore her scorn: which they shall do no more. For I'll so resent their idolatry, as shall content your wishes to the full.

Now in default of all imagination, fancy, and expression, how was the writer to turn these
 30 words into poetry or rime? Simply by diverting

¹ Hunt, 'they 're.'

² Published in 1674.

them from their natural order, and twisting the halves of the sentences each before the other.

With kindness I your prayers receive,
 And to your hopes success will give.
 I have, with anger, seen mankind adore 5
 Your sister's beauty and her scorn deplore;
 Which they shall do no more.
 For their idolatry I'll so resent,
 As shall your wishes to the full content!!¹

This is just as if a man were to allow that there 10
 was no poetry in the words, 'How do you find
 yourself?' 'Very well, I thank you;' but to hold
 them inspired, if altered into

Yourself how do you find?
 Very well, you I thank.² 15

It is true, the best writers in Shadwell's age
 were addicted to these inversions, partly for their
 own reasons, as far as rime was concerned, and
 partly because they held it to be writing in the
 classical and Virgilian manner. What has since 20
 been called Artificial Poetry was then flourishing,
 in contradistinction to Natural; or Poetry seen
 chiefly through art and books, and not in its first
 sources. But when the artificial poet partook of

¹ Venus' Song in Act 1.

² In his Preface, Hunt alludes to the unintentional similarity of this comparison with a note of Coleridge's in the *Biographia Literaria* (p. 186 of the Bohn edition): 'As the ingenious gentleman under the influence of the Tragic Muse contrived to dislocate, "I wish you a good morning, sir!" "Thank you, sir, and I wish you the same," into two blank-verse heroics:

To you a morning good, good sir! I wish.
 You, sir! I thank; to you the same wish I.'

the natural, or, in other words, was a true poet after his kind, his best was always written in his most natural and straightforward manner. Hear Shadwell's antagonist Dryden. Not a particle of
 5 inversion, beyond what is used for the sake of emphasis in common discourse, and this only in one line (the last but three), is to be found in his immortal character of the Duke of Buckingham:—

- A man so various, that he seemed to be
 10 Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
 Stiff in opinions, *always in the wrong,*
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
 But in the course of one revolving moon
 Was chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
 15 Then all for women, painting, riming,¹ drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman! who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
 Railing and praising were his usual themes,
 20 And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
 So over-violent or over-civil
That every man with him was God or Devil.
 In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded, but desert.
 25 Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
*He had his jest, and they had his estate.*²

Inversion itself was often turned into a grace in these poets, and may be in others, by the power of being superior to it; using it only with
 30 a classical air, and as a help lying next to them, instead of a salvation which they are obliged to

¹ Hunt, 'riming, dancing.'

² *Absalom and Achitophel* 545-562.

seek. In jesting passages also it sometimes gave the rime a turn agreeably wilful, or an appearance of choosing what lay in its way; as if a man should pick up a stone to throw at another's head, where a less confident foot would have stumbled 5 over it. Such is Dryden's use of the word *might* — the mere sign of a tense — in his pretended ridicule of the monkish practice of rising to sing psalms in the night.

And much they grieved to see so nigh their hall 10
 The bird that warned St. Peter of his fall;
 That he should raise his mitred crest on high,
 And clap his wings and call his family
 To sacred rites; and vex the ethereal powers
 With midnight matins at uncivil hours; 15
 Nay more, his quiet neighbors should molest
Just in the sweetness of their morning rest.

(What a line full of 'another doze' is that!)

Beast of a bird! supinely when he *might*
 Lie snug and sleep, to rise before the light! 20
 What if his dull forefathers used that cry?
 Could he not let a bad example die?¹

I the more gladly quote instances like those of Dryden to illustrate the points in question, because they are specimens of the very highest 25 kind of writing in the heroic couplet upon subjects not heroical. As to prosaicalness in general, it is sometimes indulged in by young writers on the plea of its being natural; but this is a mere confusion of triviality with propriety, and is 30 usually the result of indolence.

¹ *The Hind and the Panther* 3. 1005-1016.

Unsuperfluosness is rather a matter of style in general, than of the sound and order of words: and yet versification is so much strengthened by it, and so much weakened by its opposite, that it
5 could not but come within the category of its requisites. When superfluosness of words is not occasioned by overflowing animal spirits, as in Beaumont and Fletcher, or by the very genius of luxury, as in Spenser (in which cases it is enrich-
10 ment as well as overflow), there is no worse sign for a poet altogether, except pure barrenness. Every word that could be taken away from a poem, unpreferable to either of the above reasons for it, is a damage; and many such are death;
15 for there is nothing that posterity seems so determined to resent as this want of respect for its time and trouble. The world is too rich in books to endure it. Even true poets have died of this Writer's Evil. Trifling ones have survived,
20 with scarcely any pretensions but the terseness of their trifles. What hope can remain for wordy mediocrity? Let the discerning reader take up any poem, pen in hand, for the purpose of discovering how many words he can strike out
25 of it that give him no requisite ideas, no relevant ones that he cares for, and no reasons for the rime beyond its necessity, and he will see what blot and havoc he will make in many an admired production of its day — what marks of its inevita-
30 ble fate. Bulky authors in particular, however safe they may think themselves, would do well to

consider what parts of their cargo they might dispense with in their proposed voyage down the gulfs of time; for many a gallant vessel, though indestructible in its age, has perished; — many a load of words, expected to be in eternal demand, 5 gone to join the wrecks of self-love, or rotted in the warehouses of change and vicissitude. I have said the more on this point, because in an age when the true inspiration has undoubtedly been re-awakened by Coleridge and his fellows, and we 10 have so many new poets coming forward, it may be as well to give a general warning against that tendency to an accumulation and ostentation of *thoughts*,¹ which is meant to be a refutation in full of the pretensions of all poetry less cogitabund, 15 whatever may be the requirements of its class. Young writers should bear in mind, that even some of the very best materials for poetry are not poetry built; and that the smallest marble shrine, of exquisite workmanship, outvalues all 20 that architect ever chipped away. Whatever can be so dispensed with is rubbish.

Variety in versification consists in whatsoever can be done for the prevention of monotony, by diversity of stops and cadences, distribution of 25 emphasis, and retardation and acceleration of time; for the whole real secret of versification is a musical secret, and is not attainable to any vital effect save by the ear of genius. All the mere knowledge of feet and numbers, of accent 30

¹ Cf. some of Browning's poetry, for instance.

and quantity, will no more impart it, than a knowledge of the Guide to Music will make a Beethoven or a Paisiello. It is a matter of sensibility and imagination; of the beautiful in
5 poetical passion, accompanied by musical; of the imperative necessity for a pause here, and a cadence there, and a quicker or slower utterance in this or that place, created by analogies of sound with sense, by the fluctuations of feeling,
10 by the demands of the gods and graces that visit the poet's harp, as the winds visit that of Æolus. The same time and quantity which are occasioned by the spiritual part of this secret, thus become its formal ones — not feet and syllables, long and
15 short, iambics or trochees; which are the reduction of it to its *less* than dry bones. You might get, for instance, not only ten and eleven, but thirteen or fourteen syllables into a riming, as well as blank, heroical verse, if time and the
20 feeling permitted; and in irregular measure this is often done; just as musicians put twenty notes in a bar instead of two, quavers instead of minims, according as the feeling they are expressing impels them to fill up the time with short and
25 hurried notes, or with long; or as the choristers in a cathedral retard or precipitate the words of the chant, according as the quantity of its notes, and the colon which divides the verse of the psalm, conspire to demand it. Had the moderns
30 borne this principle in mind when they settled the prevailing systems of verse, instead of learning

them, as they appear to have done, from the first drawling and one-syllabled notation of the church hymns, we should have retained all the advantages of the more numerous versification of the ancients, without being compelled to fancy that there was 5 no alternative for us between our syllabical uniformity and the hexameters or other special forms unsuited to our tongues. But to leave this question alone, we will present the reader with a few sufficing specimens of the difference between 10 monotony and variety in versification, first from Pope, Dryden, and Milton, and next from Gay and Coleridge. The following is the boasted melody of the nevertheless exquisite poet of the Rape of the Lock — exquisite in his wit and fancy, though 15 not in his numbers. The reader will observe that it is literally *see-saw*, like the rising and falling of a plank, with a light person at one end who is jerked up in the briefer time, and a heavier one who is set down more leisurely at the other. 20 It is in the otherwise charming description of the heroine of that poem:—

On her white breast — a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss — and infidels adore;
Her lively looks — a sprightly mind disclose, 25
Quick as her eyes — and as unfixed as those.
Favors to none — to all she smiles extends,
Oft she rejects — but never once offends;
Bright as the sun — her eyes the gazers strike,
And like the sun — they shine on all alike; 30
Yet graceful ease — and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults — if belles had faults to hide;

If to her share — some female errors fall,
 Look on her face — and you'll forget 'em all.¹

Compare with this the description of Iphigenia
 in one of Dryden's stories from Boccaccio: —

- 5 It happened — on a summer's holiday,
 That to the greenwood shade — he took his way,
 For Cymon shunned the church — and used not much
 to pray: }
- His quarter-staff — which he could ne'er forsake,
 10 Hung half before — and half behind his back.
 He trudged along — unknowing² what he sought,
 And whistled as he went — for want of thought.
- By chance conducted — or by thirst constrained,
 The deep recesses of the³ grove he gained; —
- 15 Where — in a plain defended by the³ wood,
 Crept through the matted grass — a crystal flood,
 By which — an alabaster fountain stood; }
- And on the margent of the fount was laid —
 Attended by her slaves — a sleeping maid;
- 20 Like Dian and her nymphs — when, tired with sport,
 To rest by cool Eurotas they resort. —
 The dame herself — the goddess well expressed,
 Not more distinguished by her purple vest —
 Than by the charming features of her⁴ face —
- 25 And, even⁵ in slumber — a superior grace:
 Her comely limbs — composed with decent care, }
- Her body shaded — with a slight⁶ cymarr,
 Her bosom to the view — was only bare;
 Where two beginning paps were scarcely spied, —
- 30 For yet their places were but signified. —

¹ *Rape of the Lock* 2. 7-18.

⁴ Hunt, 'the.'

² Hunt, 'not knowing.'

⁵ Hunt, 'e'en.'

³ Hunt, 'a.'

⁶ Hunt, 'by a light.'

The fanning wind upon her bosom blows, —
 To meet the fanning wind — the bosom rose;
 The fanning wind — and purling streams¹ — continue
 her repose.² }

For a further variety take, from the same 5
 author's Theodore and Honoria, a passage in
 which the couplets are run one into the other,
 and all of it modulated, like the former, according
 to the feeling demanded by the occasion: —

Whilst listening to the murmuring leaves he stood — 10
 More than a mile immersed within the wood —
 At once the wind was laid. | — The whispering sound
 Was dumb. | — A rising earthquake rocked the ground.
 With deeper brown the grove was overspread — }
 A sudden horror seized his giddy head — 15
 And his ears tinkled — and his color fled. }
 Nature was in alarm. — Some danger nigh
 Seemed threatened — though unseen to mortal eye.
 Unused to fear — he summoned all his soul,
 And stood collected in himself — and whole : 20
 Not long.³ —

But for a crowning specimen of variety of pause
 and accent, apart from emotion, nothing can
 surpass the account, in *Paradise Lost*, of the
 Devil's search for an accomplice: — 25

 There was a place,
 (Nòw nòt — though Sìn — not Tìme — first wrougth
 the chànge)
 Where Tìgris — at the foot of Pàradise,
 Into a gùlf — shòt under ground — till pàrt 30
 Ròse up a fòuntain by the Trèe of Life.
In with the river sunk — and *with it* ròse
 Sàtan — invòlved in rìsing mìst — then soùght

¹ Hunt, 'stream.'

² *Cymon and Iphigenia* 79-106.

³ *Theodore and Honoria* 88-99.

- Whère to lie hid. — Sèa he had searched — and lând
 From Eden over Pòntus — and the Pòol
 Mæòtis — *up* beyond the river *Ob*;
 Dòwnward as fàr antàrctic; — and in lèngth
 5 West from Oròntes — to the òcean bàrred
 At Dàriën — thènce to the lând whère flòws
 Gànges and Indus. — Thùs the òrb he ròamed
 With nàrrow sèarch, — and with inspèction deep
 Considered èvery crèature — which of àll
 10 Mòst opportùne mìght sèrve his wìles — and fòund
 The Sèrpent — sùbtlest bèast of all the fièld.¹

If the reader cast his eye again over this passage, he will not find a verse in it which is not varied and harmonized in the most remarkable manner.

- 15 Let him notice in particular that curious balancing of the lines in the sixth and tenth verses:—

In with the river sunk, &c.

and

Up beyond the river *Ob*.

- 20 It might, indeed, be objected to the versification of Milton, that it exhibits too constant a perfection of this kind. It sometimes forces upon us too great a sense of consciousness on the part of the composer. We miss the first
 25 sprightly runnings of verse—the ease¹ and sweetness of spontaneity. Milton, I think, also too often condenses weight into heaviness.

Thus much concerning the chief of our two most popular measures. The other, called octo-
 30 syllabic, or the measure of eight syllables, offered such facilities for *namby-pamby*, that it had become a jest as early as the time of Shakespeare, who

¹ *P. L.* 9. 69–86.

makes Touchstone call it the 'butter-woman's rank'¹ to market,' and the 'very false gallop of verses.'² It has been advocated, in opposition to the heroic measure, upon the ground that ten syllables lead a man into epithets and other superfluities,⁵ while eight syllables compress him into a sensible and pithy gentleman. But the heroic measure laughs at it. So far from compressing, it converts one line into two, and sacrifices everything to the quick and importunate return of the rime.¹⁰ With Dryden compare Gay, even in the strength of Gay:³—

The wind was high, the window shakes;
With sudden start the miser wakes;
Along the silent room he stalks,15

(A miser never 'stalks;' but a rime was desired for 'walks')

Looks back, and trembles as he walks;
Each lock and every bolt he tries,
In every creek and corner pries;20
Then opes the chest with treasure stored,
And stands in rapture o'er his hoard;

('Hoard' and 'treasure stored' are just made for one another,)

But now, with sudden qualms possessed,25
He wrings his hands, he beats his breast;
By conscience stung, he wildly stares,
And thus his guilty soul declares.

¹ Hunt, 'rate.'

² *As You Like It* 3. 2. 103, 119. Hunt confuses the seven-syllabled trochaic (and that on a single riming sound) with the eight-syllabled iambic.

³ *Fable Sixth.*

And so he denounces his gold, as miser never
denounced it; and sighs because

Virtue resides on earth no more!

Coleridge saw the mistake which had been
5 made with regard to this measure, and restored
it to the beautiful freedom of which it was
capable, by calling to mind the liberties allowed
its old musical professors the minstrels, and
dividing it by *time* instead of *syllables*; — by the
10 *beat of four*, into which you might get as many
syllables as you could, instead of allotting eight
syllables to the poor time, whatever it might have
to say. He varied it further with alternate
rimes and stanzas, with rests and omissions
15 precisely analogous to those in music, and rendered
it altogether worthy to utter the manifold
thoughts and feelings of himself and his lady
Christabel. He even ventures, with an exquisite
sense of solemn strangeness and license (for there
20 is witchcraft going forward), to introduce a couplet
of blank verse, itself as mystically and beautifully
modulated as anything in the music of Glück or
Weber:—

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
25 And the owls have awakened the crowing cock;
Tu — whit! — Tu — whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it¹ crew.
Sir Leoline, the baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which²

¹ Hunt, 'he.'

² Hunt, 'bitch.'

From her kennel beneath the rock
 Maketh¹ answer to the clock,
Fòur fòr the quàrtèrs, ànd twèlve fòr the hòur,
 Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
 Sixteen short howls, not over loud; 5
 Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the nìght chills and dàrk?
The nìght is chills, but nòt dàrk.
 The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
 It covers but not hides the sky. 10
 The moon is behind, and at the full,
 And yet she looks both small and dull.
 The night is chill,² the cloud is gray;

(These are not superfluities, but mysterious
 returns of importunate feeling) 15

'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.
 The lovely lady, Christabel,
 Whom her father loves so well,
 What makes her in the wood so late, 20
 A furlong from the castle-gate?
 She had dreams all yesternight
 Of her own betrothèd knight;
 And shè in the midnight wood will pray
 For the wèal òf hër lover that's far away. 25

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
 The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
 And naught was green upon the oak,
 But moss and rarest misletoe;
 She kneels beneath the huge oak tree, 30
 And in silence prayeth she.

¹ Hunt, 'She maketh.'

² Hunt, 'chilly.'

The lady sprang up suddenly,
 The lovely lady, Christabel!
 It moaned as near as near can be,
 But what it is, she cannot tell. —

5 On the other side it seems to be
 Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
 Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?

(This 'bleak moaning' is a witch's)

10 There is not wind enough in the air
 To move away the ringlet curl
 From the lovely lady's cheek —
 There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan
 15 *That dances as often as dance it can,*
Hanging so light and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
 Jesu Maria, shield her well!

20 She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
 And stole to the other side of the oak.
 What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
 Drest in a silken robe of white.¹
 25 That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
 The neck that made that white robe wan,
 Her stately neck and arms were bare;
 Her blue-veined feet unsandaled were;
 And wildly glittered here and there
 30 The gems entangled in her hair.
 I guess 'twas *frightful* there to see
A lady so richly clad as she —
Beautiful exceedingly.

¹ Hunt, 'Dressed in a robe of silken white.'

The principle of Variety in Uniformity is here worked out in a style 'beyond the reach of art.'¹ Everything is diversified according to the demand of the moment, of the sounds, the sights, the emotions; the very uniformity of the outline is gently varied; and yet we feel that *the whole is one and of the same character*, the single and sweet unconsciousness of the heroine making all the rest seem more conscious, and ghastly, and expectant. It is thus that *versification itself becomes part of the sentiment of a poem*, and vindicates the pains that have been taken to show its importance. I know of no very fine versification unaccompanied with fine poetry; no poetry of a mean order accompanied with verse of the highest.

As to Rime, which might be thought too insignificant to mention, it is not at all so. The universal consent of modern Europe, and of the East in all ages, has made it one of the musical beauties of verse for all poetry but epic and dramatic, and even for the former with Southern Europe—a sustainment for the enthusiasm, and a demand to enjoy. The mastery of it consists in never writing it for its own sake, or at least never appearing to do so; in knowing how to vary it, to give it novelty, to render it more or less strong, to divide it (when not in couplets) at the proper intervals, to repeat it many times where luxury or animal spirits demand it (see an instance in

¹ Pope, *Essay on Criticism* 153.

Titania's speech to the Fairies¹), to impress an affecting or startling remark with it, and to make it, in comic poetry, a new and surprising addition to the jest.

- 5 Large was his bounty and his soul sincere,
 Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
 He gave to misery all he had, *a tear*;
 He gained from heaven ('twas all he wished) *a friend*.²

- The fops are proud of scandal; for they cry
 10 At every lewd, low character, — 'That's *I*.'³

What makes all doctrines plain and clear?
About two hundred pounds a year. ⁴
 And that which was proved true before,
 Prove false again? *Two hundred more*.⁴

- 15 Compound for sins they are *inclined to*,
 By damning those they have *no mind to*.⁵

— Stored with deletery *med'cines*,
 Which whosoever took is *dead since*.⁶

- Sometimes it is a grace in a master like Butler to
 20 force his rime, thus showing a laughing wilful
 power over the most stubborn materials:—

Win

- The women, and make them draw in
 The men, as Indians with a *female*
 25 Tame elephant inveigle *the male*.⁷

¹ *Midsummer Night's Dream* 3. 1. 172 ff.

² *Gray's Elegy*. Hunt inserts the *general* reference in the text, as in all these instances.

³ Dryden, Prologue to the *Pilgrim* of Fletcher. (Scott's ed. of Dryden, 8. 441.)

⁴ *Hudibras* 3. 1. 1277-1280.

⁶ *Hud.* 1. 4. 317-318.

⁵ *Hud.* 1. 1. 215-216.

⁷ *Hud.* 1. 2. 587-588.

He made an instrument to know
 If the moon shines at full or no;
 That would, as soon as e'er she *shone*, *straight*
 Whether 'twere day or night *demonstrate*;
 Tell what her diameter to an *inch* is, 5
 And prove that she's not made of *green cheese*.¹

Pronounce it, by all means, *grinches*, to make
 the joke more wilful. The happiest triple rime,
 perhaps, that ever was written, is in Don Juan:—

But oh! ye lords of ladies *intellectual*, 10
 Inform us truly, — haven't they *hen-pecked you all*?²

The sweepingness of the assumption completes
 the flowing breadth of effect.

Dryden confessed that a rime often gave him a
 thought.³ Probably the happy word 'sprung' in 15
 the following passage from Ben Jonson was
 suggested by it; but then the poet must have
 had the feeling in him:—

— Let our trumpets sound,
 And cleave both air and ground 20
 With beating of our drums.
 Let every lyre be strung,
 Harp, lute, theorbo, *sprung*
 With touch of dainty thumbs.⁴

Boileau's trick for appearing to rime naturally 25
 was to compose the second line of his couplet
 first! which gives one the crowning idea of the

¹ *Hud.* 2. 3. 261–266.

² *Don Juan*, Canto I. st. 22.

³ Perhaps referring to his *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, near the
 beginning of Neander's defense of rime.

⁴ *An Ode, or Song, by all the Muses, in celebration of her
 Majesty's Birthday, 1630.* For 'dainty' Gifford reads 'learned.'

‘artificial school of poetry.’ Perhaps the most perfect master of rime, the easiest and most abundant, was the greatest writer of comedy that the world has seen — Molière.¹

5 If a young reader should ask, after all, What is the quickest way of knowing bad poets from good, the best poets from the next best, and so on? the answer is, the only and twofold way: first, the perusal of the best poets with the greatest atten-
10 tion; and, second, the cultivation of that love of truth and beauty which made them what they are. Every true reader of poetry partakes a more than ordinary portion of the poetic nature; and no one can be completely such, who does not love, or
15 take an interest in, everything that interests the poet, from the firmament to the daisy — from the highest heart of man to the most pitiable of the low. It is a good practice to read with pen in hand, marking what is liked or doubted. It
20 rivets the attention, realizes the greatest amount of enjoyment, and facilitates reference. It enables the reader also, from time to time, to see what progress he makes with his own mind, and how it grows up towards the stature of its
25 exalter.

If the same person should ask, What class of poetry is the highest? I should say, undoubtedly, the epic;² for it includes the drama, with narration besides; or the speaking and action of the

¹ Cf. Boileau, *Satire* 2.

² See Sidney's *Defense* 3027, and note; on the other side Aristotle's *Poetics*, near the end.

characters, with the speaking of the poet himself, whose utmost address is taxed to relate all well for so long a time, particularly in the passages least sustained by enthusiasm. Whether this class has included the greatest poet, is another question still under trial; for Shakespeare perplexes all such verdicts, even when the claimant is Homer; though, if a judgment may be drawn from his early narratives (*Venus and Adonis*, and the *Rape of Lucrece*), it is to be doubted whether even Shakespeare could have told a story like Homer, owing to that incessant activity and superfœtation of thought, a little less of which might be occasionally desired even in his plays; — if it were possible, once possessing anything of his, to wish it away. Next to Homer and Shakespeare come such narrators as the less universal, but still intenser Dante; Milton, with his dignified imagination; the universal, profoundly simple Chaucer; and luxuriant, remote Spenser — immortal child in poetry's most poetic solitudes: then the great second-rate dramatists; unless those who are better acquainted with Greek tragedy than I am, demand a place for them before Chaucer: then the airy, yet robust universality of Ariosto; the hearty, out-of-door nature of Theocritus, also a universalist; the finest lyrical poets (who only take short flights, compared with the narrators); the purely contemplative poets who have more thought than feeling; the descriptive, satirical, didactic, epigrammatic.¹ It is to be borne

¹ Cf. Sidney, *Defense* 9 34 ff.

in mind, however, that the first poet of an inferior class may be superior to followers in the train of a higher one, though the superiority is by no means to be taken for granted; otherwise Pope would be superior to Fletcher, and Butler to Pope. Imagination, teeming with action and character, makes the greatest poets; feeling and thought the next; fancy (by itself) the next; wit the last. Thought by itself makes no poet at all; for the mere conclusions of the understanding can at best be only so many intellectual matters of fact. Feeling, even destitute of conscious thought, stands a far better poetical chance; feeling being a sort of thought without the process of thinking — a grasper of the truth without seeing it. And what is very remarkable, feeling seldom makes the blunders that thought does. An idle distinction has been made between taste and judgment. Taste is the very maker of judgment. Put an artificial fruit in your mouth, or only handle it, and you will soon perceive the difference between judging from taste or tact, and judging from the abstract figment called judgment. The latter does but throw you into guesses and doubts. Hence the conceits that astonish us in the gravest, and even subtlest thinkers, whose taste is not proportionate to their mental perceptions: men like Donne, for instance; who, apart from accidental personal impressions, seem to look at nothing as it really is, but only as to what may be thought of it. Hence, on the other hand, the

delightfulness of those poets who never violate truth of feeling, whether in things real or imaginary; who are always consistent with their object and its requirements; and who run the great round of nature, not to perplex and be perplexed, 5 but to make themselves and us happy. And luckily, delightfulness is not incompatible with greatness, willing soever as men may be in their present imperfect state to set the power to subjugate above the power to please. Truth, of 10 any great kind whatsoever, makes great writing. This is the reason why such poets as Ariosto, though not writing with a constant detail of thought and feeling like Dante, are justly considered great as well as delightful. Their great- 15 ness proves itself by the same truth of nature, and sustained power, though in a different way. Their action is not so crowded and weighty; their sphere has more territories less fertile; but it has enchantments of its own, which excess of 20 thought would spoil — luxuries, laughing graces, animal spirits; and not to recognize the beauty and greatness of these, treated as they treat them, is simply to be defective in sympathy. Every planet is not Mars or Saturn. There is also Venus and 25 Mercury. There is one genius of the south, and another of the north, and others uniting both. The reader who is too thoughtless or too sensitive to like intensity of any sort, and he who is too thoughtful or too dull to like anything but the 30 greatest possible stimulus of reflection or passion,

are equally wanting in complexional fitness for a thorough enjoyment of books. Ariosto occasionally says as fine things as Dante, and Spenser as Shakespeare; but the business of both is to enjoy; 5 and in order to partake their enjoyment to its full extent, you must feel what poetry is in the general as well as the particular, must be aware that there are different songs of the spheres, some fuller of notes, and others of a sustained delight; and as 10 the former keep you perpetually alive to thought or passion, so from the latter you receive a constant harmonious sense of truth and beauty, more agreeable perhaps on the whole, though less exciting. Ariosto, for instance, does not *tell* 15 *a story* with the brevity and concentrated passion of Dante; every sentence is not so full of matter, nor the style so removed from the indifference of prose; yet you are charmed with a truth of another sort, equally characteristic of the writer, 20 equally drawn from nature and substituting a healthy sense of enjoyment for intenser emotion. Exclusiveness of liking for this or that mode of truth, only shows, either that a reader's perceptions are limited, or that he would sacrifice truth 25 itself to his favorite form of it. Sir Walter Raleigh, who was as trenchant with his pen as his sword, hailed the Faery Queen of his friend Spenser in verses in which he said that Petrarch was thenceforward to be no more heard of;¹ and

¹ All suddenly I saw the Faery Queene;
At whose approach the soule of Petrarke wept,
And from thenceforth those graces were not seene.

that in all English poetry there was nothing he counted 'of any price' but the effusions of the new author.¹ Yet Petrarch is still living; Chaucer was not abolished by Sir Walter; and Shakespeare is thought somewhat valuable. A botanist might as well have said that myrtles and oaks were to disappear, because acacias had come up. It is with the poet's creations as with Nature's, great or small. Wherever truth and beauty, whatever their amount, can be worthily shaped into verse, and answer to some demand for it in our hearts, there poetry is to be found; whether in productions grand and beautiful as some great event, or some mighty, leafy solitude, or no bigger and more pretending than a sweet face or a bunch of violets; whether in Homer's epic or Gray's Elegy, in the enchanted gardens of Ariosto and Spenser, or the very pot-herbs² of the Schoolmistress of Shens-
stone, the balms of the simplicity of a cottage. Not to know and feel this is to be deficient in the universality of Nature herself, who is a poetess on the smallest as well as the largest scale, and who calls upon us to admire all her productions; not indeed with the same degree of admiration, but with no refusal of it, except to defect.

I cannot draw this essay towards its conclusion better than with three memorable words of Milton; who has said, that poetry, in comparison

¹ Of me no lines are loved, nor letters are of price,
Of all which speak our English tongue, but those of thy
device.

² *The Schoolmistress* sts. 11, 12, 13.

with science,¹ is 'simple, sensuous, and passionate.' By simple, he means unperplexed and self-evident; by sensuous, genial and full of imagery; by passionate, excited and enthusiastic. I am aware
5 that different constructions have been put on some of these words; but the context seems to me to necessitate those before us. I quote, however, not from the original, but from an extract in the Remarks on Paradise Lost by Richardson.

10 What the poet has to cultivate above all things is love and truth;—what he has to avoid, like poison, is the fleeting and the false. He will get no good by proposing to be 'in earnest at the moment.' His earnestness must be innate and
15 habitual; born with him, and felt to be his most precious inheritance. 'I expect neither profit or² general fame by my writings,' says Coleridge, in the Preface to his Poems; 'and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without
20 either. Poetry has been to me its "*own exceeding great reward*;" it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the
25 beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me.'³

'Poetry,' says Shelley, 'lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, *and makes*

¹ Not in comparison with science, but with rhetoric. See Milton's tractate *On Education*.

² Hunt, 'nor.'

³ Hunt inserts, 'Pickering's edition, p. 10;' but it is found in all the good editions.

familiar objects be as if they were not familiar; it reproduces all that it represents, and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that 5 gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it co-exists. The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which 10 exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another, and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his 15 own. The great instrument of moral good is the¹ imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause.*²

I would not willingly say anything after perorations like these; but as treatises on poetry may 10 chance to have auditors who think themselves called upon to vindicate the superiority of what is termed useful knowledge, it may be as well to add, that if the poet may be allowed to pique himself on any one thing more than another, 25 compared with those who undervalue him, it is on that power of undervaluing nobody, and no attainments different from his own, which is given him by the very faculty of imagination

¹ Hunt omits 'the.'

² See my edition of the *Defense of Poetry*, 13 27-14 12; Hunt inserts, 'Essays and Letters, vol. i, p. 16.'

they despise. The greater includes the less. They do not see that their inability to comprehend him argues the smaller capacity. No man recognizes the worth of utility more than the
5 poet; he only desires that the meaning of the term may not come short of its greatness, and exclude the noblest necessities of his fellow-creatures. He is quite as much pleased, for instance, with the facilities for rapid conveyance
10 afforded him by the railroad, as the dullest confiner of its advantages to that single idea, or as the greatest two-ideaed man who varies that single idea with hugging himself on his 'buttons' or his good dinner. But he sees also the beauty of the
15 country through which he passes, of the towns, of the heavens, of the steam-engine itself, thundering and fuming along like a magic horse, of the affections that are carrying, perhaps, half the passengers on their journey, nay, of those of the
20 great two-ideaed man; and, beyond all this, he discerns the incalculable amount of good, and knowledge, and refinement, and mutual consideration, which this wonderful invention is fitted to circulate over the globe, perhaps to the displace-
25 ment of war itself, and certainly to the diffusion of millions of enjoyments.

'And a button-maker, after all, invented it!' cries our friend.

Pardon me—it was a nobleman. A button-
30 maker may be a very excellent, and a very poetical man too, and yet not have been the first man

visited by a sense of the gigantic powers of the combination of water and fire. It was a nobleman who first thought of this most poetical bit of science. It was a nobleman who first thought of it.—a captain who first tried it,—and a button-maker who perfected it.¹ And he who put the nobleman on such thoughts, was the great philosopher Bacon,² who said that poetry had ‘something divine in it,’³ and was necessary to the satisfaction of the human mind.

10

¹ The Marquis of Worcester (1601–1667), Captain Savery (ca. 1650–1715), and Boulton (1728–1809), the business associate of Watt, and, in some sense, co-inventor with him. It can hardly be doubtful that Watt could not have introduced and perfected his invention without the assistance of Boulton. See Smiles’ *Lives of Boulton and Watt*. Hunt’s statement can, of course, only be admitted in a rhetorical sense, and not at all as a precise historical truth.

² Dircks says nothing of any indebtedness to Bacon in his *Life, Times, etc. of the Second Marquis of Worcester* (London, 1865).

³ From the *De Augment. Scient.* 2. 13 (ed. Spedding, Ellis, and Heath, 1. 519): ‘Divinitatis cujuspiam particeps videri possit.’ See *Adv. Learn.* 2. 4. 2.

NOTE ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN IMAGINATION AND FANCY.

THE distinction between imagination and fancy, of which so much account has been made in English poetical criticism, was of course not originated by Leigh Hunt. So far as is known, Coleridge was the first English writer who effected a clear severance between the two, but he only elaborated upon a hint which he drew from Richter's *Vorschule der Ästhetik* (Brandl, *Life of Coleridge*, pp. 316-317). The theory is also found in one of Wordsworth's Prefaces, no doubt as a fruit of the discussions on poetry between himself and Coleridge (see 79 16 ff., *infra*). Leigh Hunt, therefore, merely illustrates and confirms a view already current, as he, in turn, is quoted and enlarged upon by Ruskin in Vol. III. of *Modern Painters* ('Of Imagination Penetrative'). The passages from Richter, Coleridge, and Wordsworth which establish the derivation of the theory are here appended. It will be noted that the 'fancy' of the English writers is by Richter termed 'Einbildungskraft,' while their 'imagination' is his 'Phantasie' oder 'Bildungskraft.'

Foot-notes are by the present editor, except as indicated.

I.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

[*Vorschule der Ästhetik*, Programm II, § 6 and 7.]

Einbildungskraft ist die Prose der Bildungskraft oder Phantasie. Sie ist nichts als eine potenzierte hellfarbigere Erinnerung,¹ welche auch die Thiere haben, weil sie träumen und weil sie fürchten. Ihre Bilder
 5 sind nur zugeflogne Abblätterungen von der wirklichen Welt; Fieber, Nervenschwäche, Getränke können diese Bilder so verdicken und beleiben, dass sie aus der innern Welt in die äussere treten und darin zu Leibern erstarren.

10 Aber etwas höheres ist die Phantasie oder Bildungskraft, sie ist die Welt-Seele der Seele und der Elementargeist der übrigen Kräfte; darum kann eine grosse Phantasie zwar in die Richtungen einzelner Kräfte, z. B. des Witzes, des Scharfsinns u. s. w. abgegraben
 15 und abgeleitet werden, aber keine dieser Kräfte lässt sich zur Phantasie erweitern. Wenn der Witz das spielende *Anagramm* der Natur ist, so ist die Phantasie das *Hieroglyphen-Alphabet* derselben, wovon sie mit wenigen Bildern ausgesprochen wird. Die Phantasie macht alle Theile zu Ganzen — statt dass die
 20 übrigen Kräfte und die Erfahrung aus dem Naturbuche nur Blätter reissen — und alle Welttheile zu Welten, sie totalisiret alles, auch das unendliche All; daher tritt in ihr Reich der poetische Optimismus, die Schönheit der Gestalten, die es bewohnen, und die Freiheit,
 25 womit in ihrem Aether die Wesen wie Sonnen gehen.

¹ See 80 16 ff.

Sie führt gleichsam das Absolute und das Unendliche der Vernunft näher und anschaulicher vor den sterblichen Menschen. Daher braucht sie so viel Zukunft und so viel Vergangenheit, ihre beiden Schöpfung-Ewigkeiten, weil keine andere Zeit unendlich oder zu 5 einem Ganzen werden kann; nicht aus einem Zimmer voll Luft, sondern erst aus der ganzen Höhe der Luftsäule kann das Aetherblau eines Himmels geschaffen werden.

II.

COLERIDGE.

[*Biographia Literaria*, chap. 4.]

Repeated meditations led me first to suspect—and 10 a more intimate analysis of the human faculties, their appropriate marks, functions, and effects, matured my conjecture into full conviction—that fancy and imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either 15 two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more opposite translation of the Greek *φαντασία* than the Latin *imaginatio*; but it is equally true that in all societies there exists 20 an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense, working progressively to desynonymize those words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects had supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German, and 25 which the same cause, joined with accidents of translation from original works of different countries, occasion in mixed languages like our own. The first and most important point to be proved is, that two

conceptions perfectly distinct are confused under one and the same word, and — this done — to appropriate that word exclusively to one meaning, and the synonyme, should there be one, to the other. But if
 5 — as will be often the case in the arts and sciences — no synonyme exists, we must either invent or borrow a word. In the present instance the appropriation has¹ already begun, and been legitimated in the derivative adjective : Milton had a highly *imaginative*,
 10 Cowley a very *fanciful* mind. If, therefore, I should succeed in establishing the actual existence of two faculties generally different, the nomenclature would be at once determined. To the faculty by which I had characterized Milton, we should confine
 15 the term *imagination* ; while the other would be contradistinguished as *fancy*. Now were it once fully ascertained that this division is no less grounded in nature than that of *delirium* from *mania*, or Otway's

Lutes, laurels, seas of milk, and ships of amber,²

20 from Shakespeare's

What ! have his daughters brought him to this pass ?³

or from the preceding apostrophe to the elements, the theory of the fine arts, and of poetry in particular, could not, I thought, but derive some additional and
 25 important light. It would, in its immediate effects, furnish a torch of guidance to the philosophical critic, and ultimately to the poet himself. In energetic minds truth soon changes by domestication into power ; and, from directing in the discrimination and
 30 appraisal of the product, becomes influence in the

¹ First edition, 'had.' ² *Venice Preserved*, Act V.

³ *King Lear* 3. 4. 66.

production. To admire on principle is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

. . . There was a time, certainly, in which I took some little credit to myself in the belief that I had been the first of my countrymen who had pointed out the diverse meaning of which the two terms were capable, and analyzed the faculties to which they should be appropriated. Mr. W. Taylor's recent volume of synonymes I have not yet seen; but his specification of the terms in question¹ has been clearly shown to be both insufficient and erroneous by Mr. Wordsworth, in the preface added to the late collection of his Lyrical Ballads, and other poems. The explanation which Mr. Wordsworth has himself given will be found to differ from mine chiefly, perhaps, as our objects are different. It could scarcely indeed happen otherwise, from the advantage I have enjoyed of frequent conversation with him, on a subject to which a poem of his own first directed my attention, and my conclusions concerning which he had made more lucid to myself by many happy instances drawn from the operation of natural objects on the mind. But it was Mr. Wordsworth's purpose to consider the influences of fancy and imagination as they are manifested in poetry, and from the different effects to conclude their diversity in kind; while it is my object to investigate the seminal principle, and then from the kind to deduce the degree. My friend has drawn a masterly sketch of the branches, with their poetic fruitage. I wish to add the trunk, and even the roots as far as they lift themselves above ground, and are visible to the naked eye of our common consciousness.

¹ Cf. *infra* 80 25-81 15.

[*Biographia Literaria*, chap. 13.]

- The imagination then I consider either as primary or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of
 5 the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation.
 10 It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create ; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.
- 15 Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory¹ emancipated from the order of time and space ; and blended with, and modified by, that empirical phenomenon of the
 20 will, which we express by the word choice. But, equally with the ordinary memory, it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association.

III.

WORDSWORTH.

[*Preface of 1815-1845*],

- Let us come now to the consideration of the words Fancy and Imagination, as employed in the classification of the following poems. 'A man,' says an intelligent author, 'has imagination in proportion as he
 25 can distinctly copy in idea the impressions of sense :

¹ Cf. 762.

it is the faculty which *images* within the mind the phenomena of sensation. A man has fancy in proportion as he can call up, connect, or associate, at pleasure, those internal images (*φαντάζειν* is to cause to appear) so as to complete ideal representations of absent objects. Imagination is the power of depicting, and fancy of evoking and combining. The imagination is formed by patient observation; the fancy by a voluntary activity in shifting the scenery of the mind. The more accurate the imagination, the more safely may a painter, or a poet, undertake a delineation, or a description, without the presence of the objects to be characterized. The more versatile the fancy, the more original and striking will be the decorations produced.'
 — *British Synonyms discriminated*, by W. Taylor.

Is not this as if a man should undertake to supply an account of a building, and be so intent upon what he had discovered of the foundation, as to conclude his task without once looking up at the superstructure? Here, as in other instances throughout the volume, the judicious Author's mind is enthralled by etymology; he takes up the original word as his guide and escort, and too often does not perceive how soon he becomes its prisoner, without liberty to tread in any path but that to which it confines him. It is not easy to find out how imagination, thus explained, differs from distinct remembrance of images; or fancy from quick and vivid recollection of them: each is nothing more than a mode of memory. If the two words bear the above meaning and no other, what term is left to designate that faculty of which the poet is 'all compact';¹ he whose eye glances from earth to heaven,

¹ *Mid. N. D.* 5. 1. 8.

whose spiritual attributes body forth what his pen is prompt in turning to shape ; or what is left to characterize Fancy, as insinuating herself into the heart of objects with creative activity? Imagination, in the
 5 sense of the word as giving title to a class of the following poems, has no reference to images that are merely a faithful copy, existing in the mind, of absent external objects ; but is a word of higher import, denoting operations of the mind upon those objects
 10 and processes of creation or of composition, governed by certain fixed laws. I proceed to illustrate my meaning by instances. A parrot *hangs* from the wires of his cage by his beak or by his claws ; or a monkey from the bough of a tree by his paws or his tail. Each
 15 creature does so literally and actually. In the first Eclogue of Virgil, the shepherd, thinking of the time when he is to take leave of his farm, thus addresses his goats : —

Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
 20 Dumosa *pendere* procul de rupe videbo.

————— half way down
Hangs one who gathers samphire,¹

is the well-known expression of Shakespeare, delineating an ordinary image upon the cliffs of Dover. In
 25 these two instances is a slight exertion of the faculty which I denominate imagination, in the use of one word : neither the goats nor the samphire-gatherer do literally hang, as does the parrot or the monkey ; but, presenting to the senses something of such an appear-
 30 ance, the mind in its activity, for its own gratification, contemplates them as hanging.

¹ *King Lear* 4. 6. 14-15; 'who' for 'that.'

As when far off at sea a fleet descried
*Hangs*¹ in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
 Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
 Of Ternate or Tidore, whence merchants bring
 Their spicy drugs ; they on the trading flood, 5
 Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,
 Ply stemming nightly toward the pole ; so seemed
 Far off the flying Fiend.²

Here is the full strength of the imagination involved in the word *hangs*, and exerted upon the whole image: 10
 First, the fleet, an aggregate of many ships, is represented as one mighty person, whose track, we know and feel, is upon the waters ; but, taking advantage of its appearance to the senses, the Poet dares to represent it as *hanging in the clouds*, both for the gratifica- 15
 tion of the mind in contemplating the image itself, and in reference to the motion and appearance of the sublime objects to which it is compared.

From impressions of sight we will pass to those of sound ; which, as they must necessarily be of a less 20
 definite character, shall be selected from these volumes :

Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove *broods* ;³

of the same bird,

His voice was *buried* among trees,
 Yet to be come at by the breeze.⁴ 25

O, Cuckoo ! shall I call thee *Bird*,
 Or but a wandering *Voice* !⁵

¹ Cf. *supra*, 12 1.

² *P. L.* 2. 636-643.

³ Wordsworth, *Independence and Resolution*.

⁴ Wordsworth, 'O Nightingale ! thou surely art.'

⁵ Wordsworth, *To the Cuckoo*.

The stock-dove is said to *coo*, a sound well imitating the note of the bird ; but, by the intervention of the metaphor *broods*, the affections are called in by the imagination to assist in marking the manner in which
 5 the bird reiterates and prolongs her soft note, as if herself delighting to listen to it, and participating of a still and quiet satisfaction, like that which may be supposed inseparable from the continuous process of incubation. ‘His voice was buried among the trees,’
 10 a metaphor expressing the love of *seclusion* by which this bird is marked ; and characterizing its note as not partaking of the shrill and the piercing, and therefore more easily deadened by the intervening shade ; yet a note so peculiar and withal so pleasing, that the
 15 breeze, gifted with that love of the sound which the poet feels, penetrates the shades in which it is entombed, and conveys it to the ear of the listener.

Shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?

20 This concise interrogation characterizes the seeming ubiquity of the voice of the cuckoo, and dispossesses the creature almost of a corporeal existence ; the Imagination being tempted to this exertion of her power by a consciousness in the memory that the
 25 cuckoo is almost perpetually heard throughout the season of spring, but seldom becomes an object of sight.

Thus far of images independent of each other and immediately endowed by the mind with properties that
 30 do not inhere in them, upon an incitement from properties and qualities the existence of which is inherent and obvious. These processes of imagination are carried on either by conferring additional properties

upon an object, or abstracting from it some of those which it actually possesses, and thus enabling it to react upon the mind which hath performed the process, like a new existence.

I pass from the Imagination acting upon an individual image to a consideration of the same faculty employed upon images in a conjunction by which they modify each other. The reader has already had a fine instance before him in the passage quoted from Virgil, where the apparently perilous situation of the goat, hanging upon the shaggy precipice, is contrasted with that of the shepherd contemplating it from the seclusion of the cavern in which he lies stretched at ease and in security. Take these images separately, and how unaffecting the picture compared with that produced by their being thus connected with and opposed to, each other !

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
 Couched on the bald top of an eminence,
 Wonder to all who do the same espy
 By what means it could thither come, and whence,
 So that it seems a thing endued with sense,
 Like a sea-beast crawled forth, which on a shelf
 Of rock or sand reposes, there to sun himself.

Such seemed this Man ; not all alive or dead
 Nor all asleep, in his extreme old age.

Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
 That heareth not the loud winds when they call,
 And moveth altogether if it move at all.¹

In these images, the conferring, the abstracting, and the modifying powers of the Imagination, immediately

¹ Wordsworth's *Resolution and Independence* ; but with slight variations from the received text of the poem.

and mediately acting, are all brought into conjunction. The stone is endowed with something of the power of life to approximate it to the sea-beast; and the sea-beast stripped of some of its vital qualities to assimilate it to the stone; which intermediate image is thus treated for the purpose of bringing the original image, that of the stone, to a nearer resemblance to the figure and condition of the aged man; who is divested of so much of the indications of life and motion as to bring him to the point where the two objects unite and coalesce in just comparison. After what has been said, the image of the cloud need not be commented upon.

Thus far of an endowing or modifying power: but the Imagination also shapes and *creates*; and how? By innumerable processes; and in none does it more delight than in that of consolidating numbers into unity, and dissolving and separating unity into number,—alternations proceeding from, and governed by, a sublime consciousness of the soul in her own mighty and almost divine powers. Recur to the passage already cited from Milton. When the compact fleet, as one person, has been introduced ‘Sailing from Bengala.’ ‘They,’ *i.e.* the ‘merchants,’ representing the fleet, resolved into a multitude of ships, ‘ply’ their voyage towards the extremities of the earth: ‘So’ (referring to the word ‘As’ in the commencement) ‘seemed the flying Fiend;’ the image of his person acting to recombine the multitude of ships into one body,—the point from which the comparison set out. ‘So seemed,’ and to whom seemed? To the heavenly Muse who dictates the poem, to the eye of the poet’s mind, and to that of the reader, present at one moment in the wide Ethiopian, and the next in the

solitudes, then first broken in upon, of the infernal regions !

Modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.¹

Here again this mighty poet, speaking of the Messiah going forth to expel from heaven the rebellious angels, 5

Attended by ten thousand thousand Saints,
He onward came : far off his coming shone,—²

the retinue of saints, and the Person of the Messiah himself, lost almost and merged in the splendor of that indefinite abstraction, 'His coming !' 10

As I do not mean here to treat this subject further than to throw some light upon the present volumes, and especially upon one division of them, I shall spare myself and the reader the trouble of considering the Imagination as it deals with thoughts and 15 sentiments, as it regulates the composition of characters and determines the course of actions : I will not consider it (more than I have already done by implication) as that power which, in the language of one of my most esteemed friends, 'draws all things to one ; 20 which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one color and serve to one effect.'³ The grand store-houses of enthusiastic and meditative Imagination, of poetical, as contradistinguished from human and dra- 25 matic Imagination, are the prophetic and lyrical parts of the Holy Scriptures, and the works of Milton ; to which I cannot forbear to add those of Spenser. I select these writers in preference to those of ancient Greece and Rome, because the anthropomorphism 30

¹ Horace, *Epist.* 2. 1. 213.

² *P. L.* 6. 767-768.

³ Charles Lamb upon the genius of Hogarth. (Wordsworth's note.)

of the Pagan religion subjected the minds of the greatest poets in those countries too much to the bondage of definite form ; from which the Hebrews were preserved by their abhorrence of idolatry. This
 5 abhorrence was almost as strong in our great epic Poet, both from circumstances of his life, and from the constitution of his mind. However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul ; and all things tended in him towards
 10 the sublime. Spenser, of a gentler nature, maintained his freedom by aid of his allegorical spirit, at one time inciting him to create persons out of abstractions ; and, at another, by a superior effort of genius, to give the universality and permanence of abstractions to his
 15 human beings, by means of attributes and emblems that belong to the highest moral truths and the purest sensations, — of which his character of Una is a glorious example. Of the human and dramatic Imagination the works of Shakespeare are an inexhaustible
 20 source.

I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness,
 I never gave you kingdoms, call'd you daughters !¹

And if, bearing in mind the many poets distinguished by this prime quality, whose names I omit to mention ;
 25 yet justified by recollection of the insults which the ignorant, the incapable and the presumptuous, have heaped upon these and my other writings, I may be permitted to anticipate the judgment of posterity upon myself, I shall declare (censurable, I grant, if the
 30 notoriety of the fact above stated does not justify me) that I have given in these unfavorable times, evidence

¹ *King Lear* 3. 2. 14-15; with substitution of 'ye' for 'you,' 'kingdoms' for 'kingdom,' and 'daughters' for 'children.'

of exertions of this faculty upon its worthiest objects, the external universe, the moral and religious sentiments of Man, his natural affections, and his acquired passions ; which have the same ennobling tendency as the productions of men, in this kind, worthy to be holden in undying remembrance. 5

To the mode in which Fancy has already been characterized as the power of evoking and combining, or, as my friend Mr. Coleridge has styled it, 'the aggregative and associative power,' my objection is only that the definition is too general. To aggregate and to associate, to evoke and to combine, belong as well to the Imagination as to the Fancy ; but either the materials evoked and combined are different ; or they are brought together under a different law, and for a different purpose. Fancy does not require that the materials which she makes use of should be susceptible of change in their constitution, from her touch ; and, where they admit of modification, it is enough for her purpose if it be slight, limited, and evanescent. Directly the reverse of these are the desires and demands of the Imagination. She recoils from everything but the plastic, the pliant, and the indefinite. She leaves it to Fancy to describe Queen Mab as coming, 25

In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman.¹

Having to speak of stature, she does not tell you that her gigantic Angel was as tall as Pompey's Pillar ; much less that he was twelve cubits, or twelve hundred cubits high ; or that his dimensions equalled those of Teneriffe or Atlas ; — because these, and if they were 30

¹ *Rom. and Jul.* 1. 4. 55-56; *cf. supra*, 35 5 ff.

a million times as high it would be the same, are bounded : The expression is, ‘ His stature reached the sky ! ’ ¹ the illimitable firmament ! — When the Imagination frames a comparison, if it does not strike on the
5 first presentation, a sense of the truth of the likeness, from the moment that it is perceived, grows — and continues to grow — upon the mind ; the resemblance depending less upon outline of form and feature, than upon expression and effect ; less upon casual and out-
10 standing, than upon inherent and internal, properties : moreover, the images invariably modify each other. — The law under which the processes of Fancy are
carried on is as capricious as the accidents of things, and the effects are surprising, playful, ludicrous, amus-
15 ing, tender, or pathetic, as the objects happen to be appositely produced or fortunately combined. Fancy depends upon the rapidity and profusion with which she scatters her thoughts and images ; trusting that their number, and the felicity with which they are
20 linked together, will make amends for the want of individual value : or she prides herself upon the curious subtilty and the successful elaboration with which she can detect their lurking affinities. If she can win you over to her purpose, and impart to you her feelings,
25 she cares not how unstable or transitory may be her influence, knowing that it will not be out of her power to resume it upon an apt occasion. But the Imagination is conscious of an indestructible dominion ; — the Soul may fall away from it, not being able to sustain
30 its grandeur ; but, if once felt and acknowledged, by no act of any other faculty of the mind can it be relaxed, impaired, or diminished. — Fancy is given to

¹ *P. L.* 4. 988.

quicken and to beguile the temporal part of our nature, Imagination to incite and to support the eternal. — Yet is it not the less true that Fancy, as she is an active, is also, under her own laws and in her own spirit, a creative faculty. In what manner Fancy ambitiously aims at a rivalry with Imagination, and Imagination stoops to work with materials of Fancy, might be illustrated from the compositions of all eloquent writers, whether in prose or verse; and chiefly from those of our own country. Scarcely a page of the impassioned parts of Bishop Taylor's Works can be opened that shall not afford examples. — Referring the Reader to those inestimable volumes, I will content myself with placing a conceit (ascribed to Lord Chesterfield) in contrast with a passage from the *Paradise Lost*: —

The dews of the evening most carefully shun,
They are the¹ tears of the sky for the loss of the sun.²

After the transgression of Adam, Milton, with other appearances of sympathizing Nature, thus marks the immediate consequence,

Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completion³ of the mortal sin.⁴

The associating link is the same in each instance: Dew and rain, not distinguishable from the liquid substance of tears, are employed as indications of sorrow. A flash of surprise is the effect in the former case; a flash of surprise, and nothing more; for the nature of

¹ Properly 'those,' for 'they are the.'

² Chesterfield, *Advice to a Lady in Autumn*.

³ Rather, 'completing.'

⁴ *P. L.* 9. 1002-1003.

things does not sustain the combination. In the latter, the effects from the act, of which there is this immediate consequence and visible sign, are so momentous, that the mind acknowledges the justice and
 5 reasonableness of the sympathy in nature so manifested; and the sky weeps drops of water as if with human eyes, as 'Earth had before trembled from her entrails, and Nature given a second groan.'¹

Finally, I will refer to Cotton's Ode upon Winter,
 10 an admirable composition, though stained with some peculiarities of the age in which he lived, for a general illustration of the characteristics of Fancy. The middle part of this ode contains a most lively description of the entrance of Winter, with his retinue, as
 15 'A palsied king,' and yet a military monarch, — advancing for conquest with his army; the several bodies of which, and their arms and equipments, are described with a rapidity of detail, and a profusion of *fanciful* comparisons, which indicate on the part of the
 20 poet extreme activity of intellect, and a correspondent hurry of delightful feeling. Winter retires from the foe into his fortress, where

——— a magazine

25 Of sovereign juice is cellared in;
 Liquor that will the siege maintain
 Should Phœbus ne'er return again.

Though myself a water-drinker, I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing what follows, as an instance still more happy of Fancy employed in the treatment
 30 of feeling than, in its preceding passages, the Poem supplies of her management of forms.

¹ Adapted from *P. L.* 9. 1000–1001.

'Tis that, that gives the poet rage,
 And thaws the gelly'd¹ blood of age ;
 Matures the young, restores the old,
 And makes the fainting coward bold.

It lays the careful head to rest, 5
 Calms palpitations in the breast,
 Renders our lives' misfortune sweet ;

.

Then let the chill Sirocco blow,
 And gird us round with hills of snow,
 Or else go whistle to the shore, 10
 And make the hollow mountains roar,

Whilst we together jovial sit
 Careless, and crowned with mirth and wit,
 Where, though bleak winds confine us home,
 Our fancies round the world shall roam. 15

We'll think of all the friends we know,
 And drink to all worth drinking to ;
 When having drunk all thine and mine,
 We rather shall want healths than wine.

But where friends fail us, we'll supply 20
 Our friendships with our charity ;
 Men that remote in sorrows live,
 Shall by our lusty brimmers thrive.

We'll drink the wanting into wealth,
 And those that languish into health, 25
 The afflicted into joy, the opprest
 Into security and rest.

The worthy in disgrace shall find
 Favor return again more kind,
 And in restraint who stifled lie, 30
 Shall taste the air of liberty.

¹ Qu. 'gelid.' or 'jellied' ?

The brave shall triumph in success,
The lovers shall have mistresses,
Poor unregarded Virtue. praise,
And the neglected Poet, bays.

5 Thus shall our healths do others good,
 Whilst we ourselves do all we would ;
 For, freed from envy and from care,
 What would we be but what we are ?

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